



Coastal Conservancy

STATE *of* CALIFORNIA

Strategic Plan

2023-2027

Introduction

Welcome to the Coastal Conservancy's (Conservancy) Strategic Plan for 2023 through 2027. The plan presents our view of the future of the California coast and its watersheds over the next five years—including the steps needed to respond to climate change and promote environmental equity. The plan provides a roadmap for the years ahead and describes our role in implementing state and regional environmental plans, identifies measurable objectives to prioritize our work, and describes the key drivers shaping the context in which we work.

Mission Statement

The Coastal Conservancy's vision is of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future generations of Californians. We act with others to protect and restore, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, coastal watersheds, and the San Francisco Bay Area.



Photo: Groundworks San Diego

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Purpose of this Plan

This Strategic Plan is intended to serve several purposes. The plan is a communication document from the Conservancy Board and its staff, providing the public with an overall vision and measurable objectives to track the outcomes of our work and set priorities. The plan provides an overview of the Conservancy's priorities in the context of California's coastal management program. It is also a reference to assist in the coordination of the Conservancy's work with other agencies and to clarify our role implementing state and regional environmental plans. Finally, the plan is intended to provide control agencies such as the Department of Finance, Legislative Analyst, and State Auditor with an explanation of the Conservancy's priorities and context for our projected staff and funding.

Updating our Strategic Plan creates an opportunity for the Conservancy to hear from partners – nonprofit organizations, tribes, local governments, community groups, state and federal agencies, private landowners, conservation organizations, and the public – about their vision and priorities for the Conservancy's work. During the spring of 2022, the Conservancy conducted an online survey and held more than 30 focus groups and listening sessions to get input into the plan. We heard from more than 1,000 individuals representing both existing and potential new partner entities. The engagement included members of the public as well as individuals representing community-based organizations, inclusive access advocates, tribes and tribal nonprofits, environmental groups, coastal cities and counties, other agencies, and entities advancing workforce development. A summary of the that engagement process is in Appendix 1.

TERM DEFINITION:

“Coastal”

In this plan, the term coastal broadly refers to the areas where the Coastal Conservancy works. This includes areas along the coast, in the entirety of the nine San Francisco Bay area counties, in coastal watersheds, in the jurisdiction of the Santa Ana River Conservancy, and along the Great Redwood Trail. When we state that “the Conservancy is committed to improving the ability of all Californians to access and enjoy the coast”, we mean access to recreational lands along the outer coast, in coastal watersheds, throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, along the Santa Ana River Parkway and the Great Redwood Trail.

Plan Context

Addressing Inequity

The Coastal Conservancy recognizes that we have not done enough to address inequities along the California coast and are committed to addressing injustices and inequities. In 2020, the Coastal Conservancy Board adopted Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines ([JEDI Guidelines](#)) that recognize the history of injustice, exclusion, displacement, and extractive processes towards California's Native Americans, Black people, people of color, and other frontline communities which has resulted in inequitable access to the coast and its resources that persists today.

The JEDI Guidelines identify ways that the Conservancy can work to promote more equitable outcomes for all Californians, especially systemically excluded communities, across all the Conservancy's activities, including its partnerships, funding programs, engagement practices, and its work with California's Native American Tribes and tribal communities. The JEDI Guidelines also address the Conservancy staff and board (in regard to diversity and training) as well as transparency and accountability. This Strategic Plan takes another step to integrate the JEDI Guidelines into the foundation of the Conservancy's work by identifying specific objectives related to the goal of addressing inequity.

A major focus of the engagement effort was to hear ideas about how the Conservancy could change its practices to better serve systemically excluded communities. Many of the participants in the engagement were

TERM DEFINITION:

“Systemically Excluded Communities”

Systemically excluded communities, historically and often currently, are not afforded opportunities that are open to others, because they are discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion, gender, age, disability, or other social identity. Political and policy-making processes and government investments typically marginalize these communities. As a result, members of these communities have been denied full participation in economic, social, and civic life, and may have insufficient funds, resources, or other assets to address social, political, and environmental issues.

Systemically excluded communities include but are not limited to Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; low-income communities, non-English speakers, and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty, pollution burden, or inequality.

potential partners that had not worked with the Conservancy.

Goal 1 in this Strategic Plan is *Prioritize Equity*. Under that Goal we have identified specific objectives and metrics to track our work over the next five years.

Climate Crisis

California is already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate, including rising sea level, loss of nearshore kelp forest habitat, severe heat waves, severe storms and associated flooding, a succession of droughts, and intense wildfires. The Conservancy has worked for nearly 50 years to conserve California's incredible coastal resources; those resources face an unprecedented threat from impacts of a changing climate and there is an urgent need to take action to adapt to these impacts. Many reports identify the need to implement nature-based adaptation measures. There is a finite amount of time to act if we want to use nature-based adaptation measures such as living shorelines, habitat restoration, and other natural infrastructure to address climate impacts. The Baylands and Climate Change: What Can We Do; Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Science Update (SFEI, 2015) concluded that tidal marshes established by 2030 are more likely to provide ongoing benefits when sea-level rise accelerates in the middle of this century.

Sea-level rise is already accelerating along the California coast and will continue to increase substantially over the 21st century, threatening coastal communities, natural resources, cultural sites, and infrastructure. Coastal wave events and rising sea levels are causing flooding, saltwater intrusion into coastal groundwater aquifers, and will increase coastal erosion, impacting beaches and cliffs throughout the state.

California is currently experiencing a multi-year drought caused by repeated years of low precipitation combined with high temperatures. January through March of 2022 was the driest on record dating back over 100 years, with just six inches of precipitation observed across the Sierra Nevada. Climate change will continue to exacerbate these conditions, even if some extreme precipitation events occur. Warming air temperatures increase moisture loss from soils, which will lead to drier seasonal conditions even if precipitation increases. Models predict a shrinking snowpack in California's mountains which will dramatically reduce surface and groundwater throughout the state.

Wildfires driven by multiple, interacting factors such as human activity, land use, rising temperatures, and drought are burning larger areas, hotter and more intensely than in recent history. The 2020 wildfires resulted in the largest wildfire season recorded in California's modern history. These fires, many of which were

in coastal and Bay Area counties, had enormous impacts on Californians. Lives were lost, homes and property were destroyed, hundreds of thousands of people had to flee their homes, and millions of residents were exposed to dangerously unhealthy air. Recent wildfires have devastated coastal parklands, impacting recreational infrastructure and wildlife habitat. Climate change is extending the periods of wildfire risk and increasing the likelihood of future fires.

Funding

The climate crisis in California is being met with unprecedented investment by the state in nature-based climate adaptation projects. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 22-23 Budget, the Coastal Conservancy received \$350 million for climate resilience, \$120 million for nature-based sea level rise resilience, and \$10 million for wildfire resilience. In addition, the Conservancy has about \$29 million in unspent bond funds and expects to receive additional annual appropriations of \$3.8 million from the Habitat Conservation Fund until 2029. The Conservancy expects to receive \$650,000 in appropriations for Explore the Coast annually.

The FY 22-23 California budget is a once in a generation public investment in resilience, outdoor access, and natural resources. In addition to the funding for the Coastal Conservancy, the budget includes significant funding for climate resilience for other agencies. Much of this funding is being allocated in the budget process, but the broad proposals include:

- \$3.111 billion Climate Set Aside
- \$1.465 billion for Drought Resilience and Response
- \$ 773 million Funding for Nature-Based Solutions
- \$ 530 million for Wildfire and Forest Resilience
- \$ 300 million Addressing Extreme Heat
- \$ 50 million Opportunity Acquisitions: Nature-Based Solutions

As we developed the priorities in this Strategic Plan, we avoided duplicating programs established in other agencies and focused on the Conservancy's distinctive role within the State.

There are also significant federal funds available for Conservancy projects in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, through National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency, and other federal partner agencies.

The Conservancy's funding is typically intended for project planning, design, and implementation, including the regional planning, community engagement, environmental review, and scientific monitoring needed to move projects forward and gauge success. Given the one-time nature of our funding, the Conservancy cannot support ongoing operations, maintenance, or long-term scientific monitoring projects.

Key Strategies

Implement Existing Plans

The Conservancy's Strategic Plan implements California's broader strategies for conservation and climate change adaptation as articulated in several recent state plans, including: [Pathways to 30x30](#); [Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#); the [State Agency Sea-Level Rise Action Plan](#); the [Ocean Protection Council's Strategic Plan](#); the [California Climate Adaptation Strategy](#); and the [California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#). This Strategic Plan builds off these plans to articulate the Conservancy's role advancing the goals and strategies in those documents. In preparing this Strategic Plan, staff reviewed these existing plans to identify priorities and objectives that the Conservancy could implement. Where appropriate, we have used language directly from those plans in describing our goals or objectives.

The Conservancy has long supported regional conservation planning and we will continue to use regional plans to identify and prioritize projects consistent with the larger statewide objectives. The metrics in this plan measure progress towards implementation of regional conservation plans including the [Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project Regional Strategy](#), the [San Francisco Bay Area Conservation Lands Network](#), the [Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report](#), the [San Francisco Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals Report](#), and others. The Conservancy will also continue to support project planning, prioritizing inclusive partnerships that increase capacity in local and systemically excluded communities and tribes to ensure the costs and benefits of conservation are equitably distributed and shared. This work supports specific recommendations in the [Pathways to 30x30](#) and the [State Agency Sea Level Rise Action Plan](#).

Accelerate Action

The urgency of the climate crisis combined with the exceptional investment of state funding create an opportunity for the Conservancy to take bold action over the next five years. Throughout the engagement process, we heard the need for the Conservancy to help meet this moment and make real progress advancing climate resilience. Project partners want to see us 'do big things'. Partners encouraged the Conservancy to prioritize action and implement projects that have been planned over the past several years. The Conservancy was also encouraged to provide leadership advancing challenging projects and to be willing to take some risk by funding innovative projects. The Conservancy will continue to facilitate interagency coordination and cut green tape. The Conservancy will prioritize regionally significant, multi-benefit, nature-based climate adaptation projects to address the climate crisis.

Build Capacity and Invest in Meaningful Engagement

Accelerating action must be balanced with the need to improve engagement and build capacity with systemically excluded communities. Our engagement process and other state plans highlight the need for the Conservancy to invest funds and time to build capacity in communities so that those communities can develop their own plans for their future. As stated in the [Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#), the Conservancy will seek to "(p)rioritize and practice equity, including through meaningful community engagement and prioritizing implementation of nature-based solutions that benefit the communities most vulnerable to climate change."

"Support collaboration between conservation groups, community-based service groups and residents in under-resourced communities to build authentic relationships that help identify true barriers to access and work out projects from there. That level of relationship building takes time."
- SCC Strategic Plan Survey Participant, 2022

Intertribal focus group participants encouraged the Conservancy to develop an engagement strategy that goes beyond our existing Tribal Consultation Policy. In addition to the specific types of projects identified below to return power to tribes, the Conservancy will strive to communicate with tribes earlier, build relationships, have more face-to-face meetings, and make it easier for tribes to work with the Conservancy, both in terms of resources and time.

How we work

Support Our Partners

The Conservancy accomplishes its mission by working with other entities to get projects done. We rely on many partners, including other public agencies, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations to achieve our goals. This plan envisions that the Conservancy will continue to work with existing partners while also expanding our partnerships with better engagement and support for building capacity among potential new partners, including community-based organizations, tribal non-profits, and tribes that we have not worked with in the past. Our staff will continue to provide technical assistance to grantees to help them manage their SCC grants.

Support Planning & Project Monitoring

One of the most common comments we heard was the importance of the Conservancy's continued support for planning, including meaningful engagement, conceptual plans, site specific design, and environmental review and permitting. Specifically, participants appreciated and urged the Conservancy to continue to fund early planning and to continue to support innovative and pilot projects.

The Conservancy will also continue to play a role coordinating other agencies to accelerate project review and to advance implementation of regionally important projects. The Conservancy will support application of the best available science in project planning, and subject projects to independent scientific review when appropriate. The Conservancy will support required project monitoring to ensure projects are meeting their intended purposes, evaluate effectiveness, and apply lessons learned to future projects.

TERM DEFINITION:

“Community-Based Organizations”

An organization that is driven by community residents in all aspects of its existence, and meets most of the following criteria: the majority of the governing body and staff consists of local residents; the main operating offices are in the community; priority issue areas are identified and defined by residents; solutions to address priority issues are developed with residents; and program design, implementation, and evaluation components have residents intimately involved, in leadership positions.

Seek Other Support for Operations & Maintenance

The Conservancy has one-time funding that cannot support long-term costs such as operations and maintenance. However, the Conservancy recognizes the need for operation and maintenance funds. Land managers need funding for ongoing stewardship and tribal partners need long-term funding to support co-management activities. While our funding is ill suited to these needs, the Conservancy will work to identify and support efforts to secure other funding to address these needs. This Strategic Plan does not anticipate the Conservancy will fund routine operations and maintenance activities.

Grantmaking Practices

The Conservancy was urged to simplify our grant making practices, reduce bureaucracy and increase transparency. In the engagement survey, respondents identified grant solicitations through a pre-proposal and invitation to submit full proposal as the approach that worked best. The Conservancy anticipates that most of the grants will be made through that process with some targeted grant rounds. This plan envisions that the Conservancy will provide more assistance to potential partners, including: grant application webinars, pre-application consultations, and guidance to unsuccessful applicants on how to strengthen future proposals. We also intend to make our grant disbursement policies more workable for smaller, community-based organizations through measures like revisiting our indirect cost policy and expanding our ability to advance funds rather than reimbursing grantees for past expenditures. The Conservancy will continue its practice of not requiring matching funds.

Project Selection Criteria

This Strategic Plan identifies broad objectives for the next five years. Individual projects will be selected using the Conservancy's [Project Selection Criteria](#). The project selection criteria describe priorities the Conservancy will use to evaluate specific grant applications and to select individual projects for funding. These criteria were updated in 2021 and include six criteria:

1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.
2. Project is a good investment of state resources.
3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes.
4. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.
5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.
6. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.

Project Tracking & Reporting

The Conservancy tracks its projects in an internal project database. This database allows us to provide annual reports to the Conservancy Board and the public on progress achieving the Strategic Plan objectives. All of our grant opportunities will continue to be posted on the [California Grant Portal](#) in addition to the Conservancy's own website. Projects are reported to statewide tracking systems related to specific funding sources, including the [California Climate Investments](#) and the [Agency Bond Consolidated Reporting System](#). Projects that benefit aquatic resources are included in [EcoAtlas](#) and wildfire fuel reduction projects are uploaded into CalFIRE's [Fuel Reduction Project Viewer](#).

Goals & Objectives

The Strategic Plan identifies five goals. Under each goal there are more specific objectives and under each objective, quantified metrics for the next five years. The metrics were determined through consultation with project staff, key stakeholders, project partners, and statewide and regional plans. During the engagement process, the public was invited to submit project ideas to the Conservancy, these ideas also informed the metrics. The metrics are based on what can be achieved in each region given the opportunities and constraints that exist. For example, acres of habitat restoration that can be accomplished are grounded in availability of restorable lands, regional restoration goals, and understanding of the schedules for specific projects in each region. The numbers were also based on grant applications already submitted to the Conservancy and the Conservancy's anticipated future commitments to ongoing, large-scale projects.

Goal 1: Prioritize Equity

The Coastal Conservancy recognizes that we have not done enough to address inequities along the California coast and is committed to addressing injustices and inequities. Goal 1 of this Strategic Plan identifies specific objectives and quantified metrics to focus and track the Conservancy's work on prioritizing equity.

There are four objectives under this Goal:

- 1.1 Commit Funding to Benefit Systemically Excluded Communities
- 1.2 Return Power to Tribes
- 1.3 Support Systemically Excluded Communities
- 1.4 Incorporate Workforce Development in Our Projects

1.1 Commit Funding to Benefit Systemically Excluded Communities

The Conservancy will commit 40% of its funding to projects that benefit systemically excluded communities. This objective will be measured across all of Conservancy funding over the five years of this Strategic Plan.

Projects that benefit systemically excluded communities are projects where the community's interests and concerns are integrated into the project design and implementation and/or where benefits have been identified by the community that address its needs. Examples of benefits to communities include, but are not limited to projects that:

- Are led by people from systemically excluded communities.
- Include engagement with and participation by people from systemically excluded communities.
- Improve environmental or recreational conditions within the community or within a distance of 0.5 mile.
- Provide employment to people in the community or sustainable economic development in the community.
- Improve climate resilience of the community (reducing risks from future flooding, sea level rise, wildfire, or other climate change impacts).
- Reduce barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast for members of the community, including limited transportation options or lack of accessible facilities.
- Elevate voices from the community; this could include incorporating culturally relevant interpretive storytelling elements or artistic styles in project design and educational materials.
- Include anti-gentrification and/or anti-displacement measures.
- Employ people from systemically excluded communities.

The Conservancy will provide guidance for applicants on how to document if a project benefits a systemically excluded community, including links to existing web-based tools such as [CalEnviroScreen](#), [California Climate Investments Priority Populations](#) and [State Parks Community Fact Finder](#). Some systemically excluded communities are not mapped, the Conservancy guidance will suggest other means of demonstrating benefit, such as direct participation by community-based organizations.

Metric 1.1.1: Funding allocated to projects that benefit systemically excluded communities

Target: 40% of funding

1.2 Return Power to Tribes

This objective will include projects that return control of ancestral lands to California Native American Tribes through acquisition or that provide California Native American Tribes access to land through easements or cooperative agreements. These projects could provide California Native American Tribes access to lands for cultural practice, ceremony, tribal management, and subsistence hunting and harvesting. The Conservancy will work with tribes to advance tribal co-management of lands and to incorporate tribal expertise and traditional ecological knowledge in land management throughout our jurisdiction, including support for cultural burning.

TERM DEFINITION:

“Co-management”

A collaborative effort established through an agreement in which two or more sovereigns mutually negotiate, define, and allocate amongst themselves the sharing of management functions and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources. (Definition from the California Fish and Game Commission)

Potential projects will be identified in partnership with California Native American tribes through early, often, and meaningful government-to-government consultations and collaborations. The Conservancy will support projects that provide tribal entities with capacity building support, including tribal workforce development. The Conservancy will support efforts identified in [Pathways to 30x30](#) and the [State Agency Sea Level Rise Action Plan](#), to build tribal capacity to prioritize acquisition of unprotected lands, protect cultural resources, sacred sites, and other important locations, and address both recreational access and tribal rights to access lands for cultural, subsistence, or ceremonial purposes.

Metric 1.2.1: Projects that return power to tribes

Target: 35

1.3 Support Meaningful Engagement by Systemically Excluded Communities

The Conservancy will support projects that meaningfully engage systemically excluded communities in public co-visioning processes to develop projects anchored in community priorities and expertise. The Conservancy will support planning of on-the-ground projects through processes that build capacity of community-based organizations staffed by or serving systemically excluded communities. The Conservancy will support meaningful engagement processes that address unequal power dynamics between communities and government, historic inequity, injustices, and trauma. The Conservancy will support engagement processes that make it easy for community members to participate by providing stipends, meeting in convenient locations, using virtual venues, providing childcare and food, and developing materials in appropriate languages and messages for the community.

Metric 1.3.1: Projects with meaningful community engagement.

Target: 40 projects

1.4 Incorporate Workforce Development in Our Projects

Conservancy grants create jobs, many of which require unique skills, training, and equipment. Incorporating workforce development into our projects and providing pathways for workers to get training in ecological restoration, wildfire resilience, trail construction, or other work funded by Conservancy grants will amplify the benefits of our project funding.

TERM DEFINITION:

“Workforce Development”

Workforce development typically refers to training programs that help workers acquire skills to get jobs and remain competitive. It can include utilizing existing job skills programs or developing new programs, such as apprenticeships, depending on an entity’s individual specialty and needs.)

The Conservancy will support pathways for local and systemically excluded communities to access skills and economic opportunities with jobs that include living wages and benefits, technical training, and job advancement opportunities. The Conservancy will collaborate with project partners to identify opportunities to include workforce development objectives in their projects. This objective implements one of the objectives of

the [State Agency Sea Level Rise Action Plan](#). The Conservancy will support workforce development by including funding for workforce development in its projects. Examples of workforce development tools and strategies that could be incorporated into Conservancy projects include:

- Project implemented by the California or local Conservation Corps.

- Contractors pay workers prevailing wage or a living wage and provide benefits.
- Project includes apprenticeship programs and hire apprentices on construction and restoration projects.
- Project Labor Agreement/Community Benefits Agreement in place for large public works projects.
- Project uses targeted contracting preferences to increase equity and diversity.
- Project hires employees locally when possible.
- Project partners with existing programs or institutions that provide training and skills such as conservation corps, community colleges, nonprofit organizations, tribes, public agencies, private companies, labor management partnerships, State-certified apprenticeship programs, and high school career technical academies.
- Project includes capacity building or training resulting in credentials (e.g., certifications, certificates, degrees, licenses, other documentation of competency and qualifications) to support long-term, stable employment and career development.
- Project works with the [Ecological Workforce Initiative](#) or other similar organizations to train provide training related to environmental compliance or restoration work.
- Leverage the resources of existing State and local employment programs such as the [high road training partnership](#) and the resources of the [California Labor and Workforce Development Agency](#) which includes the [Employment Development Department](#), the [California Workforce Development Board](#), the [Employment Training Panel](#), and the [Department of Industrial Relations](#).

Metric 1.4.1: Projects that incorporate workforce development

Target: 40 projects

Goal 2: Enjoy the Coast

The Conservancy is committed to improving the ability of all Californians to access and enjoy the coast. The Conservancy has [Coastal Access Project Standards](#) that it will use in addition to this Strategic Plan and the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria when considering, evaluating, and prioritizing public access projects. As site conditions vary along the coast, the application of these standards is flexible, however, these standards articulate the following important goals for all coastal access projects:

- provide equitable and barrier-free access;
- enhance inclusive public visitation;
- protect sensitive ecological areas;
- account for coastal hazards, including future sea level rise;
- incorporate sustainable design;
- encourage non-motorized transportation;
- foster appreciation and stewardship of the coast's natural and cultural resources; and
- link communities to the coast.

There are seven objectives under the Enjoy the Coast Goal:

- 2.1 Explore the Coast – provide enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.
- 2.2 Coastal Stories projects that plan, develop, and implement storytelling installations that present communities and voices historically excluded or under-represented.
- 2.3 Accessibility projects that reduce barriers to coastal access for people with disabilities.
- 2.4 Build Trails - including the California Coastal Trail, the Santa Ana River Parkway, the Great Redwood Trail, the San Francisco Bay and Ridge Trails, and other regional trails.
- 2.5 Enhance recreational amenities including restrooms, parking, paths, interpretive centers, picnic areas, restrooms, shade structures, water fountains, camping, and signage.
- 2.6 Piers and Waterfronts – support multi-benefit, coastal resilience projects that revitalize waterfronts.
- 2.7 Explore the Coast Overnight – Increase the variety and amount of lower-cost coastal accommodations and programs to connect lower-income Californians with those accommodations in order to reduce barriers to accessing and enjoying the coast.

This Goal directly implements the Resources Agency's [Outdoors for All](#) initiative and is consistent with the conservation priorities to expand access to nature identified in [Pathways to 30x30](#), including:

- Incorporate programming, education, outreach, and engagement that is accessible and representative of California's cultural diversity.
- Protect and restore natural areas and connections within and near urban and rural communities that have barriers of access to nature.
- Provide for a wide variety of outdoor recreation experiences across conserved areas.
- Increase access points and trails within existing natural areas including coastal areas and urban rivers.

The Conservancy will continue the Explore the Coast grant program to provide joyful coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges accessing or enjoying the coast. These projects will provide a memorable experience at the coast; reduce economic, physical, operational, or societal barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast; and/or inspire an ongoing coastal resource stewardship ethic through active learning and interactive activities. Through this program we will continue to support the external advisory board for the Explore the Coast program and our accessibility advisory board and consider creating other advisory boards in the future.

"My mother is now 85 and still loves the beach. She, however, is no longer able to make the walk. After a two-year hiatus, due to the specially designed wheelchairs available at Moro Beach and Crystal Cove, we were able to make three trips during my most recent visit this summer to Southern California. We stayed until 6:30 p.m. each time. Thank you so very much for supplying the beach wheelchairs. You brought us such joy! "
- Colleen Jaques

2.1 Explore the Coast Program Grants

The annual Explore the Coast grants will fund projects that provide participants with joyful and culturally relevant coastal experiences. These grants will support projects that reduce economic, physical, or societal barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast, including providing organized outings, mentorship and other support, overnight coastal experiences, providing transportation or promoting use of public transit to the coast.

Metric 2.1.1: Number of Explore the Coast Grants

Target: 100 projects

Metric 2.1.2: Number of Explore the Coast Priority Community Members served

Target: 35,000 community members served

TERM DEFINITION:

“Explore the Coast Priority Community”

The Explore the Coast grant program seeks to provide enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast (“ETC Priority Communities”). ETC Priority Communities may include but are not limited to lower-income individuals and households, people with disabilities, people of color, indigenous communities, immigrant communities, foster youth, and other historically excluded communities who face societal challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.

2.2 Coastal Stories Program

The Coastal Stories Program will support projects that plan, develop, and implement storytelling installations or materials (such as murals, signage, monuments, or guides) that represent communities and voices that have been historically excluded from accounts of California's coast and publicly accessible lands. These communities may include but are not limited to systemically excluded communities.

Metric 2.2.1: Number of Coastal Stories Program Grants

Target: 16 projects

2.3 Expand Accessibility

The Conservancy will support accessibility projects that reduce barriers to coastal access for people with disabilities. Projects include planning and construction of accessible staging areas, parking lots, trails, restrooms, signage, and other recreational amenities, as well as funding beach mats, beach wheelchairs, and other accessibility devices to maximize barrier-free access to the coast. Accessibility projects also include increasing access to information about the accessibility of recreational facilities and amenities.

Metric 2.3.1: Number of Projects that Expand Accessibility
Target: 35 projects

2.4 Build Trails

The Conservancy will support projects to plan and build trails that increase access to and along the Coast, for both recreation and active transportation purposes. This objective includes projects to help complete five flagship trails. The **Coastal Trail** will be a continuous trail along the coast from the Oregon border to the Mexican Border. The **Great Redwood Trail** will be a trail stretching from San Francisco Bay to Humboldt Bay along a former railroad right of way. The **Santa Ana River Trail** will be a multi-use trail from the crest of the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean near Huntington Beach. The **San Francisco Bay Trail** will be a continuous walking and biking trail around the San Francisco Bay and across its major bridges. The **Bay Area Ridge Trail** will be a 550-mile long trail connecting along the ridgeline above San Francisco Bay.

In addition to these trails, the Conservancy will also support other regional trails that connect communities and expand access to and along the coast. The Conservancy will work with collaboratives and find new multi-benefit opportunities such as integrating trails with wildfire fuel breaks or other wildfire resilience work. Many trails may also be designed to help adapt shorelines to future sea level rise.

Metric 2.4.1: Miles Trail Planned
Target: 125 miles

Metric 2.4.2: Miles Trail Built
Target: 80 miles

Metric 2.4.3: Miles Great Redwood Trail Rail-banked
Target: 252 miles

2.5 Recreation Facilities & Amenities

The Conservancy will support enhancement of facilities, such as picnic areas, parking lots, restrooms, and other amenities to enhance coastal recreational opportunities. The Conservancy will support educational and interpretive facilities and signage, including multi-lingual signage that enable people to enjoy natural, cultural, and historical resources. The Conservancy will support development of camping and other affordable overnight accommodations that support regional trails. These projects may also include pilot programs to support shuttles or other programs that increase transportation options to access the coast.

Metric 2.5.1: Recreational facilities & amenities planned

Target: 40 projects

Metric 2.5.2: Recreational facilities & amenities projects built

Target: 30 projects

2.6 Piers and Waterfronts

The Conservancy recognizes the value of piers and waterfronts for tourism, recreation, and fishing. The Conservancy will support multi-benefit, coastal resilience projects that revitalize waterfronts. Examples of these projects could include renovation of piers, removal of derelict infrastructure, improvements to waterfront parks, fishing docks or facilities to adapt to sea level rise or improve the resilience of fishing communities, and projects that demonstrate innovation in sensitively integrating hard infrastructure into the natural coastal environment, like living sea walls.

Metric 2.6.1: Pier and waterfront projects planned

Target: 8 projects

Metric 2.6.2: Pier and waterfront projects built

Target: 4 projects

2.7 Explore the Coast Overnight

The cost of staying overnight at the California coast is a major barrier to equitable access. The Conservancy will support projects to increase the supply of lower-cost overnight accommodations. This will include projects to plan and construct a variety of affordable accommodations, including campsites, hostels, cabins, and other affordable lodging. The Conservancy will also support pilot projects and partnerships that help make those opportunities available to low-income Californians.

Metric 2.7.1: Explore the Coast Overnight Projects planned
Target: 8 projects

Metric 2.7.2: Explore the Coast Overnight Projects built
Target: 4 projects

Metric 2.7.3: Pilot projects that expand Explore the Coast Overnight Projects
partnerships
Target: 2 projects

Goal 3: Protect & Restore the Coast

The Conservancy works to ensure the coast is protected and restored for existing and future generations. The overall goal is to support projects and activities that protect and enhance the coast's scenic, natural, and agricultural resources. These natural and scenic resources of the coast are vital to the state's economy and quality of life, as well as to the wildlife that depends upon them. Climate change will be a driving factor affecting all resource conservation activities in the future and is further addressed under the *Climate Ready* goal.

Another ongoing challenge is the limited availability of funding for management of habitat restoration and land acquisition projects. Management needs should be addressed upfront in our projects. Long-term, sustained conservation will continue to require partnerships with public agencies and nongovernmental organizations to manage lands and reduce operational costs.

3.1 Conserve Land

Coastal land in California is under increasing pressure from developers and private interests. The Conservancy will fund acquisition of land and conservation easements to protect resource lands, working lands, and public access properties. The Conservancy will also support conservation of resource lands identified in regionally led and scientifically based planning efforts to protect high quality resources. This objective will also include acquisition of lands to increase habitat connectivity or support inland migration of habitat with sea level rise. This objective directly implements the goals of the [Pathways to 30x30](#).

Metric 3.1.1: Acres of land conserved
Target: 50,000 acres

3.2 Restore or Enhance Habitats

The Conservancy will support projects to restore or enhance habitats including subtidal habitats, wetlands, riparian areas, redwood forests, oak woodlands and other important wildlife habitats, including projects to protect and restore healthy sea otter populations. The Conservancy will support wildlife corridor projects and projects that reduce barriers to fish migration. The Conservancy will also support projects to restore coastal watersheds, including dam removal projects. This objective directly implements many actions identified in the [Pathways to 30x30](#) and [Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#), including:

- Identify and prioritize restoration projects on degraded landscapes and waterways most important to protecting biodiversity or restoring natural systems. In coordination with implementation of the [Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#) and other relevant state climate change initiatives, identify areas where environmental restoration will achieve the most significant climate benefits, including protecting carbon stores, sequestering carbon, and buffering human and natural communities from the impacts of climate change.
- Implement watershed-scale restoration projects that connect land and coastal water habitats; restore forests and oak woodlands; protect and improve fish and wildlife corridors to connect already conserved landscapes and waterways. Utilize natural flood protection tools and remove unnecessary or obsolete barriers from waterways to restore connectivity and fish passage.
- Restore and enhance coastal wetlands in a manner that ensures these habitats can keep pace with future sea level rise, such as conserving and restoring inland areas to allow for upland migration and through sediment augmentation.
- Identify and prioritize wetland restoration near communities most vulnerable to climate change and where climate smart land management can improve groundwater and water quantity, protect communities from flooding, and increase access to nature.
- Enhance subtidal habitats to benefit aquatic species and possibly protect shorelines from erosion by reducing wave energy Restore rivers, floodplains, riparian areas, and estuaries to improve habitat and facilitate their natural function and connectivity.

Metric 3.2.1: Habitat restoration or enhancement projects planned
Target: 85 projects

Metric 3.2.2: Acres of habitat restored or enhanced
Target: 11,000 acres

Metric 3.2.3: Wildlife corridor protection or enhancement projects
Target: 15 projects

Metric 3.2.4: Anadromous fish habitat or watershed enhancement projects
Target: 30 projects

3.3 Working Lands

The Conservancy will support projects to protect working lands, including farmland, rangeland, and forests. This will include acquisitions and easement projects to ensure continued protection of agricultural and grazing lands. The Conservancy will support agricultural practices that improve carbon sequestration, minimize water use, and protect sensitive habitats. We will also support projects to increase water storage on working lands for food production and drought resilience. Finally, we will support working forest projects including habitat protection, carbon sequestration, and where possible, public access.

Metric 3.3.1: Projects to support working lands

Target: 30 projects

3.4 Cut Green Tape

The Conservancy will support projects that accelerate permitting and environmental review for habitat restoration, nature-based adaptation, wildfire resilience, public access, and other environmental projects. The Conservancy will support regulatory pre-application coordination and information exchange among regulatory agencies to share lessons learned and examples of success for streamlining permitting. We will also support the development and use of tools such as programmatic permits. The Conservancy will support plans and projects to assist applicants with regulatory processes, expedite regulatory agency approvals, and remove regulatory barriers to coastal conservation and public access.

Metric 3.4.1: Projects to cut green tape

Target: 8 projects

Goal 4: Climate Ready

The Conservancy's Climate Ready Program funds and provides technical support to local communities, nonprofits, agencies, and other partners to plan multi-objective climate change adaptation strategies along the coast and to implement nature-based adaptation projects. The Conservancy, through its Climate Ready Program, is focused on climate resilience projects that help to protect natural resources and public access into the future. The Climate Ready Program prioritizes the use of natural infrastructure as an adaptation strategy and as a way to sequester carbon in natural systems. Under this Goal, the Conservancy will support projects and techniques that can be used by other entities up and down the coast and to elevate the implementation of large-scale adaptation projects based on lessons learned from prior pilot projects. We will support planning and project development as well as implementation, prioritizing communities that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts and have limited capacity to plan and implement adaptation projects.

TERM DEFINITION:

“Natural Infrastructure”

Natural infrastructure, also referred to as green infrastructure, uses existing natural areas (and engineered solutions that mimic natural processes) to minimize flooding, erosion, and runoff. (Definition from NOAA)

4.1 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Projects

The Conservancy will support adaptation planning and pilot projects to protect coastal resources and increase the resiliency of the natural and built environments to the impacts of sea level rise. The Conservancy will support projects that adapt public infrastructure along the coast including urban waterfronts, public access infrastructure, ports, and ecosystems to protect communities and natural resources from sea-level rise.

TERM DEFINITION:

“Living Shorelines”

Living shorelines use plants or other natural elements – sometimes in combination with harder shoreline structures – to stabilize estuarine coasts, bays, and tributaries. (Definition from NOAA)

The Conservancy will support living shoreline projects and nature-based sea level rise adaptation. Consistent with the [Natural and Working Lands Strategy](#) and the [State Agency Sea Level Rise Action Plan](#), the Conservancy will “plan, implement, and fund nature-based solutions, strategies, and actions to increase coastal resiliency through flood reduction, habitat restoration, and protection of cultural resources and public access infrastructure, especially at the most vulnerable coastal recreational facilities”. We will support shoreline retreat where appropriate, especially where that retreat enhances public resources. The Conservancy will support projects that allow space for upland and inland migration of coastal habitats. As identified in the [State Agency Sea Level Rise Action Plan](#), the Conservancy will also work with museums, aquariums, and community based organizations to promote public education about sea level rise.

The Conservancy will support reconnecting sediment supply to the coast through dam removal and watershed restoration projects. The Conservancy will also support beneficial reuse of sediment to advance wetland restoration, dune restoration, and other nature-based sea level rise adaptation efforts. Consistent with the legislative mandates in the Climate Ready program, the Conservancy will support long-term solutions that use nature to increase resilience. As discussed earlier, the Conservancy does not have funding to pay for operations or maintenance.

Metric 4.1.1: Sea level rise adaptation projects planned
Target: 50 projects

Metric 4.1.2: Sea level rise adaptation projects implemented
Target: 30 projects

Metric 4.1.3: Sea level rise adaptation interpretive or educational projects
Target: 8 projects

4.2 Wildfire Resilience Projects

Through its Wildfire Resilience Program, the Conservancy will support local partners to develop and implement projects that improve ecological health of natural lands and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in areas where people live. The Conservancy will also support the goals of the [California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#) by funding planning to identify priority projects, technical assistance, permitting and environmental review costs so that multiple projects are ready to implement throughout our jurisdiction. The Conservancy will support projects that include grazing, prescribed burns, forest thinning, invasive plant removal, and other implementation projects to reduce wildfire risk. The Conservancy will support wildfire resilience projects that collaborate with Californian Native American Tribes to implement traditional ecological knowledge and expand cultural burning. Conservancy will fund demonstration and pilot projects such as biomass utilization projects to reduce the costs and increase sustainability of wildfire resilience work.

Metric 4.2.1: Wildfire resilience projects planned

Target: 30 projects

Metric 4.2.2: Acres of wildfire resilience projects implemented

Target: 7,5000 acres

4.3 Multi-benefit Nature-Based Climate Adaptation

The Conservancy will support nature-based climate adaptation projects that increase resilience, sequester carbon, address extreme heat and drought, or promote regenerative agriculture or biodiversity, particularly in urban settings. Projects may include capacity-building, planning and design, technical assistance, implementation, or developing pilots or proof-of-concept projects that can then be scaled up via partner implementation funding.

Metric 4.3.1: Multi-benefit, nature-based climate adaptation projects planned

Target: 20 projects

Metric 4.3.2: Multi-benefit, nature-based climate adaptation projects implemented

Target: 15 projects

Goal 5: Organizational Goals

The Conservancy needs to build and maintain an organization with the capacity and skills to achieve the goals in this Strategic Plan. The key to the Conservancy's success is its staff. The first objective of this goal is to support staff development and retention. The second objective under this goal relates to transparency. The Conservancy will strive to be transparent and accountable, sharing information about our work and accomplishments with stakeholders and the public.

5.1 Support our Staff

The Conservancy will support recruitment, hiring, and training efforts to ensure staff have the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to accomplish our work. A critical element to achieving our equity goals is ensuring our staff have the training and ability to support this work.

Metric 5.1.1: Provide training for staff to expand skills and knowledge related to tribal engagement, access for people with disabilities, and equity.

Metric 5.1.2: Support retention efforts including opportunities to increase salaries, professional growth opportunities, and continued growth of an inclusive workplace.

Metric 5.1.3: Support recruitment and hiring efforts that ensure the candidate pools for Conservancy jobs reflect California's diversity, and implicit bias in hiring processes is addressed.

5.2 Transparency

As an agency whose projects and staff are funded with public dollars, we strive to be transparent and accountable, sharing information about our work and accomplishments with stakeholders and the general public through multiple outreach tools. The Conservancy will continue its practice of providing an annual financial report to the Board and the public. We will also develop an annual internal audit of our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) work to continually evaluate and improve our practices related to JEDI work and tribal engagement. We will also use our website, social media presence, annual progress reports, and other outreach tools to ensure transparency and improve external communications about the Conservancy's work and accomplishments.

Metric 5.2.1: Provide annual JEDI Report that includes an audit and review of lessons learned from our tribal engagement and other JEDI initiatives.

Metric 5.2.2: Provide annual Financial Report to the Conservancy Board and the public.

Metric 5.2.3: Provide annual report on Strategic Plan progress, with qualitative metrics and highlights of major accomplishments.

Appendices

1. [Strategic Plan Engagement Report](#)
2. [Conservancy Authorities](#)
3. [Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines \(JEDI Guidelines\)](#)
4. [Project Selection Criteria](#)
5. [Financial Report](#)

Appendix 1 - California State Coastal Conservancy Strategic Plan Engagement Report

August 2022

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) has been guided by a series of five year Strategic Plans for the past twenty years. The current plan was adopted in November 2017 and set goals and objectives for 2018-2022. In the spring of 2022, the Conservancy embarked on an outreach and engagement effort to develop a new Strategic Plan for the five year period of 2023-2027. The goals of the outreach dovetailed with the Conservancy's new policies since the last Strategic Plan, including the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) guidelines, Project Selection Criteria, and Coastal Access Project Standards.

Engagement Strategies

During the Spring of 2022, over 1,000 individuals were engaged to understand their Coastal Resilience needs and to better understand how the Conservancy can modify their programs to meet the needs of organizations, with a significant focus on equity. Outreach included online and in-person focus groups and listening sessions, and an online survey and interactive project mapping tool. While the Conservancy reached out to existing partners, a significant component of the outreach focused on reaching communities and inviting organizations who were new to the Conservancy, including community based organizations, tribal nonprofits, organizations focused on equitable coastal access, organizations serving people with disabilities, and organizations focused on workforce development.

Acknowledgements

Many members of the Coastal Conservancy staff participated in the Strategic Plan engagement process. The Conservancy was assisted by a consulting team from Calm Waters Group that included: Marcus Griswold (Lead), Jerry Bowers (Strategic Planning), Jessica Lass (Strategic Communications), Arlin Benavides, Carl Olton, and Monica Dwight (Engagement Specialists).

We appreciate the time and thoughtfulness of everyone who provided input into the draft Strategic Plan. Their ideas and insights helped the Conservancy to understand Coastal Resilience needs and how to better meet the needs of its partners.

Introduction

The State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) has been guided by a series of five year Strategic Plans for the past twenty years. The current plan was adopted in November 2017 and set goals and objectives for 2018-2022. In the spring of 2022, the Conservancy embarked on a statewide outreach and engagement effort to develop a new Strategic Plan for the five year period of 2023-2027. The Strategic Plan update creates an opportunity for the Conservancy to hear from partners – nonprofit organizations, tribes, local governments, community groups, state and federal agencies, private landowners, conservation organizations, and the public – about their vision and priorities for the Conservancy's work.

The Mission of the Conservancy informed the outreach and engagement process. The State Coastal Conservancy's vision is of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future generations of Californians. The Conservancy acts with others to protect and restore, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, coastal watersheds, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Conservancy has three core program areas:

- Enjoy the Coast – increase outdoor recreation and access for all Californians
- Protect & Restore the Coast – natural resources open space conservation & enhancement
- Climate Ready – adapt to climate change impacts and increase resilience of natural areas

Since the last Strategic Plan, the Conservancy has adopted Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) guidelines and updated its Project Selection to incorporate JEDI recommendations. This Strategic Plan will also inform the Conservancy's grantmaking programs that are expected to receive significant funding over the next five years to address Coastal Resilience.

Community Engagement Goals

Through the outreach described below, Calm Waters Group and the Conservancy staff engaged a broad range of organizations and individuals. The Conservancy achieves its goals through partnerships with other organizations, nonprofits, tribes, and other government agencies. These are critical partners to the Conservancy and were included in the engagement process. Many of these entities are familiar with the Conservancy and are interested in this plan because they want the Conservancy to help support their projects. The goal of the outreach was to hear from the Conservancy's partners and to reach new partners, including leaders in workforce development, community-based organizations, equitable and inclusive access, and tribal nonprofits, among others.

Calm Waters Group worked with the Conservancy to engage with potential partners that may not have worked with the Conservancy before to bring forth ideas that will benefit underserved communities and tribes, and that will support improved equity approaches in funding and programs.

The goal of the engagement was to get input to guide the work of the Conservancy for the next five years. Participants were asked for feedback on priority issues that Conservancy work could help address, potential projects, technical assistance needs, and thoughts on SCC work as a whole. Here are some of the questions discussed through the engagement:

- What are the most pressing needs and what should the Conservancy prioritize?
- What is the most important single thing the Conservancy could accomplish in the next 5 years?
- What are the most pressing coastal resilience issues or needs in California that the Conservancy could help address and how?
- What are the barriers to addressing those needs and how could the Conservancy help to overcome them?
- What type of support outside of funding would help you achieve your coastal resilience goals?
- What challenges or barriers do you face, how can the Conservancy help address that challenge?
- What are successful examples the Conservancy should be aware of?

- What are the specific JEDI challenges and opportunities for the issues discussed and how could Conservancy help address them?

Summary of Outreach Activities

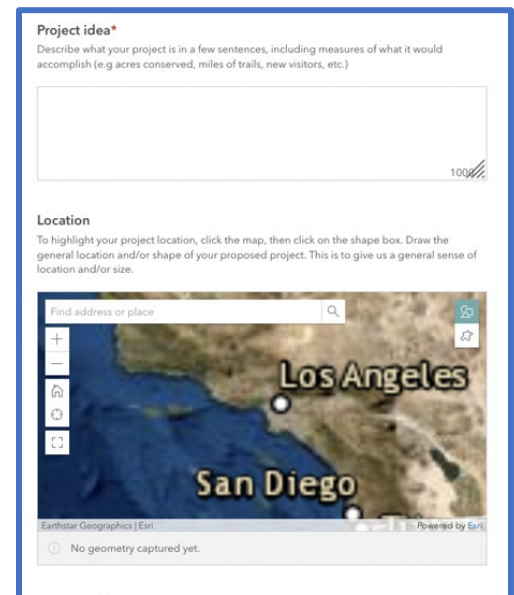
During the Spring of 2022, Calm Waters Group and Conservancy staff led a process to engage coastal communities through online and in-person focus groups and listening sessions, and through an online survey and interactive project mapping tool.

In addition to existing Conservancy contact lists, Calm Waters Group helped Conservancy staff to identify and reach out to new organizations, including community based organizations, tribal nonprofits, organizations focused on equitable coastal access, organizations serving people with disabilities, and organizations focused on workforce development.

Online Survey and Map

An online survey was distributed to the Conservancy's email listserv and during each outreach event and through social media networks. A summary of the Survey is provided in Section 3.

An interactive, online project map form was developed allowing participants to add information on their project ideas to a map. One hundred and twenty seven projects were submitted on that form. In addition, Together Bay Area had completed a similar exercise and provided all of its project ideas for implementing Pathways to 30x30 to the Conservancy. This exercise helped the Conservancy see where partners had identified potential projects and informed the metrics developed in the Strategic Plan.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Project idea*" with a sub-header "Describe what your project is in a few sentences, including measures of what it would accomplish (e.g. acres conserved, miles of trails, new visitors, etc.)". Below this is a large text input field. The second section is titled "Location" with instructions: "To highlight your project location, click the map, then click on the shape box. Draw the general location and/or shape of your proposed project. This is to give us a general sense of location and/or size." Below the instructions is a map interface with a search bar "Find address or place", a map showing the Los Angeles and San Diego areas, and a "No geometry captured yet." message at the bottom.

Written Comments

The Conservancy received emails and letters providing written comments on the Strategic Plan over a two month period. Some of these comments encouraged prioritization of specific geographic areas or types of projects. Other comments articulated broader themes or priorities for consideration in the plan.

Outreach Events

The Conservancy and Calm Waters Group participated in many different events with a structured discussion to get input from participants. Collectively, more than 1,000 people participated in these events. Some events were open to the public, some targeted participants with particular experiences, perspective or knowledge. The discussion in each session was tailored to the group and topic. A complete list of all of these events is provided below.

Kick Off Webinar

The Conservancy hosted a webinar on March 28, 2022 to kick off the strategic planning process and provide an overview of the engagement and opportunities to provide input. [The recording of the webinar can be found here.](#)

Listening Sessions and Focus Groups

The Conservancy and Calm Waters Group held 26 focus groups, listening sessions, and workshops. Focus groups were smaller meetings to discuss specific issues or topics in depth with invited participants, listening sessions had online, open registration, so that anyone could join. The Conservancy held two in-person workshops, one in Ft. Bragg and one after a Conservancy Board meeting.

We held listening sessions organized around geographic areas or broad aspects of the Conservancy's work. Specific focus groups included community based organizations (CBO) working in specific regions, workforce development, access for people with disabilities, and an intertribal focus group that included tribes and tribal nonprofits.

Meetings with Other Organizations

The Conservancy also presented the Strategic Plan and obtained input at meetings held by other organizations including: Bay Area Regional Trails Collaborative, Together Bay Area, San Diego Climate Collaborative, North Bay Watershed Association, and Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network.

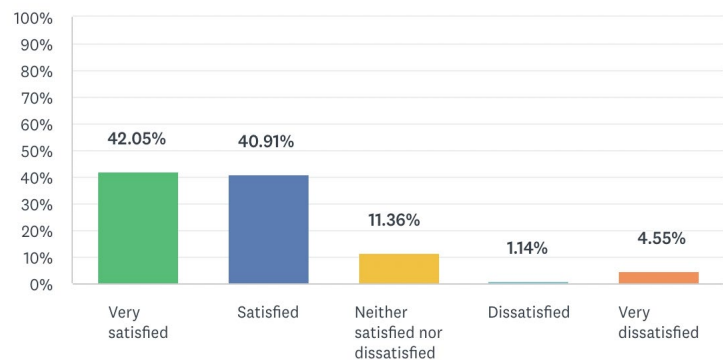
Table 1 Outreach Events and Attendance

Date	Attendees	Event	Type
3/28/22	120	Strategic Plan Public Webinar	Webinar
4/8/22	100	North Bay Watershed Association	Existing Conference
4/25/22	36	Central Coast Climate Collaborative	Focus Group
4/26/22	32	Bay Area Regional Trails Collaborative	Existing Meeting
4/27/22	70	BayCAN	Existing Meeting
4/27/22	25	Fort Bragg Town Hall	In Person Workshop
4/29/22	7	Resource Conservation Districts	Focus Group
5/4/22	18	Workforce Development	Focus Group
5/5/22	20	SCC Board Meeting Workshop	In Person Workshop
5/9/22	10	Santa Cruz Mtns Stewardship Network	Existing Meeting
5/10/22	29	Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo	Listening Session
5/10/22	36	Santa Cruz/Monterey	Listening Session
5/11/22	10	Bay Area Community Based Organizations (CBOs)	Focus Group
5/12/22	15	Access for People with Disabilities	Focus Group
5/17/22	25	Coastal Resilience Network	Listening Session
5/17/22	11	Central Coast CBOs	Focus Group
5/23/22	8	Outdoor Equity	Focus Group
5/24/22	15	SF Bay Joint Venture	Existing Meeting
5/24/22	12	Intertribal Focus Group	Focus Group
5/25/22	110	Bay Area Counties	Listening Session
5/25/22	33	Wetlands Recovery Project	Listening Session
5/26/22	14	Together Bay Area	Existing Meeting
5/26/22	12	South Coast CBOs	Focus Group
5/31/22	47	Humboldt/Del Norte	Listening Session
5/31/22	130	Wildfire Resilience	Listening Session
6/1/22	7	North Coast - CBOs	Focus Group
6/1/22	1	Landscape Stewardship Network	Focus Group
6/1/22	21	Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains	Listening Session
6/1/22	11	LA/Ventura/OC/San Diego	Listening Session
6/7/22	24	San Diego Climate Collaborative	Focus Group

Survey Results

One hundred and seventy one people participated in the online survey. Participants were split proportionally across the coastal counties, with a slightly larger percent from the South Coast. Nearly a third of participants were from non-profit organizations, followed by local government staff and individuals. The fewest number of participants came from faith-based organizations, federal or state agencies. Nearly half of the participants had not worked with the Conservancy previously.

Some of the survey questions asked about respondents' experience working with the Conservancy and ways the Conservancy could improve. For these answers, respondents who had not worked with the Conservancy were removed from the analysis. 85% of respondents were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the Conservancy's performance.



The survey asked participants to describe the Coastal Conservancy in one word. The answers are provided in this word cloud. Many of the most frequent responses were positive, like "collaborative" and "essential". Other responses suggest areas for improvement, including "bureaucratic" and "confusing".



Participants were asked what approach to grant solicitation worked best for their community or organization. Respondents preferred pre-proposals followed by an invitation to submit full proposal. Other popular grant making strategies included targeted grant rounds and pre-proposal consultations.

Survey responses related to barriers to public access, coastal resilience priorities and ways the Conservancy could better support under-resourced communities are summarized in the themes that follow.

Key Themes

Throughout the engagement, we asked for input around priorities, challenges, and opportunities for the Conservancy to support action. As discussed above, some engagement events covered all aspects of the Conservancy's work, others focused on a specific issue area or geography. Here are some of the questions discussed through the engagement:

- What are the most pressing needs and what should the Conservancy prioritize?
- What is the most important single thing the Conservancy could accomplish in the next 5 years?
- What challenges or barriers do you face, what resources (other than funding) are needed?
- What are examples of effective community-based projects you are aware of?
- What strategies would foster a more inclusive project planning/implementation process for Conservancy grants?

Priorities

Coastal Access

Common barriers to public access identified through the engagement were lack of public transit, private development, limited parking, and unmaintained or inaccessible facilities. Some participants identified feeling unwelcome or unsafe as a barrier to coastal access. The lack of coastal access for tribes was identified as a barrier; tribal focus group participants expressed that they did not have access and privacy for cultural practices. Some participants noted that support is needed for working with unhoused communities, many who live along the shoreline, to support equitable outcomes.

Specific recommendations for improving coastal access for people with disabilities included provide information about where accessible access to the coast exists; funding transportation; expanding wheelchair accessibility at the coast, creating an advisory group of people with various disabilities, and providing Conservancy staff with training.

Across the state, coastal communities noted the challenges faced with stewarding coastal ecosystems as the number of visitors increased, indicating a need for additional signage, education, trash receptacles, and long-term maintenance in the face of increased usage.

Coastal Resilience

Participants were asked to identify priorities for increasing coastal resilience. Many participants identified the need to adapt to sea level rise, the anticipated flooding impacts and the need to protect coastal habitats into the future. Participants shared concern about loss of habitat and loss of public access due to sea level rise. Participants noted a need for projects that address sediment impaired watersheds, dam removal to allow sediment to flow to the beaches and fish to migrate upstream, acquisition of floodplains, and storm and flood water capture. Other coastal resilience priorities included: drought, wildfire risk and extreme heat. Many participants encouraged the Conservancy to support nature-based solutions, watershed approaches, and strategies that implement other statewide plans like the 30x30 initiative.

Some participants also suggested the Conservancy work to increase public awareness of climate change impacts, through partnerships with cultural institutions and museums, and non-traditional partnerships such as the Ad Council.

Working with Tribes

Tribal focus group participants identified the need to return lands to tribes. Participants encouraged the Conservancy to consider cultural easements and co-management as mechanisms that give tribes access to culturally important sites and to integrate tribal knowledge into restoration practices. Tribal focus group participants also described the need access to the coast for ceremonies, and specifically described the need for privacy for some cultural practices. Tribal focus group participants identified the need for transportation to the coast and affordable lodging at the coast. Tribal focus group participants suggested the Conservancy provide staff training on working with tribes, update its tribal engagement policy, and consider an audit of past tribal engagement of what has and hasn't worked in the past. Finally, tribal focus group participants recommended that the Conservancy improve its practices working with tribes to communicate earlier, build relationships, have more face to face meetings, and make it easier for tribes to work with the Conservancy, both in terms of resources and time.

Community Based Organizations

Focus groups were held with community based organizations in each of the four Conservancy regions - North, Central, South Coasts, and the San Francisco Bay region. The input from these four sessions recommended that the Conservancy work to center and educate communities by giving them an opportunity to take a leadership role in project planning, including community-informed design, local workforce development, intergenerational storytelling, and citizen science projects. Participants highlighted the need to support equitable access by directly connecting neighborhoods to the coast through transit or bicycle access and to address financial barriers through low cost accommodations and low cost access to sports equipment. Participants stressed the importance of creating a feeling of safety for coastal visitors. Participants identified that restoration projects should address gentrification, support community stewardship, and watershed connectivity to underserved communities. Climate Ready work should address loss of coastal access to underserved communities, support access to coastal cooling in light of extreme heat in urban and inland areas.

Workforce Development

Workforce development was brought up by many participants across meetings, in addition the Conservancy held one focus group specific to the topic. Participants recommended the Conservancy include workforce benefits when evaluating grant projects and pay for training. It was suggested that the Conservancy use its projects to support job pathways, diverse career pathways, mentorship, paid training, and apprenticeships. The Conservancy was encouraged to leverage the resources of other workforce initiatives, community organizations, unions, community colleges, and state programs that are building workforce training program especially for hard to reach communities. The Conservancy was also encouraged to continue to support the California Conservation Corps and the local Conservation Corps.

How the Conservancy can address challenges or barriers

Reduce Barriers in Grant Making

Numerous participants cited the grant process as a barrier to funding, particularly for small nonprofits and jurisdictions. Many organizations noted the challenges with reimbursement grants, delays in funding, and the low indirect cost rates. Survey respondents suggested that the Conservancy reduce reporting requirements and allow for full indirect cost rate recovery. Suggestions included workshops throughout the grant process to help identify the best fit for funding and continued support on grant management and administration including technical support on project development, writing grant applications, and developing budgets.

Build Capacity

Participants recommended that the Conservancy provide funding directly to community organizations and make it easier for them to receive grants. These grants should support for long term outreach, relationship building with communities, and capacity building. Specific recommendations included providing funding for participation and organizational development. Organizations also asked for capacity-building support to help understand and navigate government structures to achieve project outcomes.

Support Project Planning

Many participants encouraged the Conservancy to continue to fund project planning. Participants also suggested the Conservancy should play a convening role, bringing together organizations to accelerate coastal resilience projects and build capacity within under-resourced communities. The Conservancy could support organizations in creating a corridor of funding that takes a project from concept to planning/design to permitting and then to implementation with multiphase or multiyear grant programs. Participants recognized the role of the Conservancy in serving as a bridge between grantees and other government agencies and decision makers. Many participants asked the Conservancy for help working with other agencies. As noted by participants, for new projects or smaller organizations, some community groups may not be aware of what agencies exist or what they do.

Technical Assistance

Participants noted the value they place on the Conservancy staff's expertise. They suggested working groups of staff support development of, and technical assistance on a range of topics. Across most of the meetings participants asked for assistance with permitting, noting the unique role the Conservancy can play in supporting organizations. As noted by participants, support needed for getting project permits submitted and approved

Transparency & Staff Training

Participants recommended that the Conservancy provide more staff training on a variety of topics, including increasing accessibility and engagement practices. Tribal focus group participants suggested Conservancy staff explore training on cultural humility, to move beyond land acknowledgements, and to be transparent in communication with tribes. Participants also recommended that the Conservancy provide more transparency about its funding decisions. Tribal focus group participants recommended an annual audit of work with tribes and other JEDI work to identify ways that the Conservancy could improve its practices.

Appendix 2 – Conservancy Statutory Authorities and Programs

Coastal Access (Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 31400-31414)

The California Constitution and the Coastal Act require that public access to and along the shoreline be maximized. Widespread concern about losing public access to the coast led in 1972 to passage of Proposition 20, which created the Coastal Commission, and to the enactment of the Coastal Act in 1976. PRC Section 30001.5(c), a provision of the Coastal Act, declares the state's goal to "maximize public access to and along the coast and maximize public recreational opportunities in the Coastal Zone consistent with sound resource conservation principles and constitutionally protected rights of private property owners."

The Coastal Conservancy is directed to "have a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state's coastline. . ." (PRC Section 31400). The Conservancy may award grants and undertake projects to acquire, develop, and manage land for access, and to assist nonprofit organizations and public agencies in establishing accessways and related functions. (PRC Sections 31400.1, 31400.2, 31400.3). The Conservancy is also charged with coordinating the development of the California Coastal Trail, in consultation with the Department of Parks and Recreation and the California Coastal Commission, and with helping to expand inland trail systems that link to the Coastal Trail (PRC Sections 31408, 31409).

In 2002, the Legislature declared that in order to prevent the potential loss of public accessways to and along the state's coastline, it is in the best interest of the state to accept all offers to dedicate real property that protect open space or have the potential to provide access to the shoreline and view areas, or that provide a connection to other public properties or easements. These offers to dedicate frequently result from conditions specified in development permits issued by the Coastal Commission. The Legislature has mandated that the Conservancy accept any outstanding offers to dedicate public accessways that are not accepted by others within 90 days of their expiration dates (Public Resources Code 31402.2).

In 2018, to address California's diminishing supply of affordable overnight accommodations, which is a barrier to coastal access for many, the legislature directed the Conservancy to develop and implement a program to increase lower cost accommodations within one and one-half miles of the coast. PRC Section 31412. The Conservancy is authorized to undertake projects and award grants to implement the program. The Conservancy was required to prepare an assessment of lower cost accommodations, which it completed in 2019 ("Explore the Coast Overnight: An Assessment of Lower-Cost Coastal Accommodations") pursuant to PRC Section 31413.

Natural Resource Enhancement (PRC Sections 31251-31270)

The Conservancy is authorized to undertake projects and award grants to enhance coastal resources that, because of indiscriminate dredging and filling, improper location of improvements, natural or human-induced events, or incompatible land uses, have suffered loss of natural or scenic values (PRC Sections 31251). Under this authority, the Conservancy preserves and increases fish and wildlife habitat and other resource values and funds acquisition and restoration of resource degraded sites.

Watershed Restoration (PRC Section 31220)

In order to improve and protect coastal and marine water quality and habitats, the Conservancy may undertake and award grants for coastal watershed and coastal and marine habitat water quality, sediment management, and living marine resources protection and restoration projects. Projects funded under this authority must be consistent with relevant water quality control plans and watershed plans or programs.

Urban Waterfronts (PRC Section 31300-31316)

In enacting the Urban Waterfront Restoration Act of 1981 (Public Resources Code Section 31300-31316), the Legislature determined that many urban waterfront areas in California "are in need of restoration in order to be the vital economic and cultural component of the community which they once were," (PRC Section 31301), and it provided the Conservancy with authority to undertake projects and award grants for restoration of urban waterfronts. The Conservancy is directed to coordinate the activities of all other state agencies and relevant federal agencies with programs affecting urban waterfronts (PRC Section 31302).

The Conservancy may support projects and activities that are compatible with the preservation, restoration, or enhancement of ocean, coastal, or watershed resources, or that facilitate environmental education related to these resources. And, the Conservancy may undertake activities and to support events or infrastructure related to coastal, watershed, or ocean resource education and maritime history (PRC Section 31316).

Preservation of Agricultural Land (PRC Section 31150-31156.)

The Conservancy has authority to undertake projects and award grants to prevent the loss of agricultural land in the coastal zone and to sustain continued agricultural production on such lands (PRC Sections 31150, 31156). These projects can include acquisition of fee title or easements and agricultural improvements.

Reservation of Significant Coastal Sites (PRC Sections 31350-31356)

The Conservancy may acquire, hold, protect, and use interests in coastal resource lands that would otherwise be lost to public use (PRC Sections 31350), in order to preserve them for purposes of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, the California Coastal Act, the San Francisco Bay Plan, and other legislation (PRC Sections 31351). The Conservancy may also award a grant to a nonprofit organization or public agency for these purposes, and offer technical assistance (PRC Sections 31352).

Solving Land-Use and Development Controversies (PRC Sections 31200-31215)

The Coastal Conservancy is authorized to undertake projects and award grants for the purpose of restoring areas that, because of scattered ownerships, poor lot layout, inadequate park and open space, incompatible land uses, or other conditions, are adversely affecting the coastal environment or are impeding orderly development (PRC Section 31200). Under this authority, the Conservancy assists local governments to direct new development to appropriate sites through public actions, including transfer of development, lot consolidation and revised subdivision, hazard mitigation, and open-space acquisition financing.

San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (PRC Sections 31160-31165)

The San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program was created to address the resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy has authority in the nine county San Francisco Bay Area to undertake projects and award grants to achieve the following goals (PRC Sections 31162):

- Completion of regional trails (such as the San Francisco Bay Trail, Bay Area Ridge Trail, California Coastal Trail, and San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail), consistent with the rights of private property owners and without significant adverse impacts on agricultural operations and environmentally sensitive habitats and wildlife.
- Completion of local trails that connect population centers and public facilities, such as parks or recreational centers.
- Provision of recreational and educational facilities, such as interpretive centers, picnic areas, staging areas, and campgrounds.
- Protection of lands, through fee title acquisition, conservation or agricultural easements, or other methods) that provide wildlife habitat,

connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other regionally significant resources, such as agriculture.

- Restoration or enhancement of habitats, corridors, and watersheds, such as wetland and riparian habitat restoration and invasive species projects.
- Provision of projects that provide open space and natural areas that are accessible to urban populations for recreational and educational purposes.
- Facilitation of environmental education related to ocean, coastal, bay, or watershed resources, such as exhibits or events or the development of amenities and infrastructure (PRC Section 31165).

The Conservancy is charged with (PRC Section 31163):

- Identifying resource and recreational goals for the Bay Area, in cooperation with local and regional public agencies, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, land trusts, and others;
- Supporting interagency actions and public/private partnerships in order to achieve the goals outlined above and generate support for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program; and
- Giving highest priority to projects that are supported by adopted plans, are multijurisdictional or serve a regional constituency, can be implemented in a timely way, have benefits that could be lost if not quickly implemented, and include matching funds.

Santa Ana River Conservancy Program (PRC Section 31170-31180)

In 2015, the Santa Ana River Conservancy Program was created within the Conservancy to address the resource and recreational goals of the Santa Ana River corridor.

The Conservancy is charged with preparing a Santa Ana River Parkway and Open Space Plan to determine the policies and priorities for conserving the Santa Ana River and its watershed; identify underused, existing public open spaces and recommend ways to provide better public use and enjoyment in those areas; and identify and prioritize additional low-impact recreational and open-space needs, including additional or upgraded facilities and parks that may be necessary or desirable. In 2018, the Conservancy approved the "Santa Ana River Parkway and Open Space Plan."

The Conservancy has the authority to undertake projects and award grants to help achieve the following goals:

- Recreational opportunities, open space, trails, wildlife habitat and species restoration, enhancement, and protection, wetland restoration and protection, agricultural land restoration and protection, protection and maintenance of the quality of the waters in the Santa Ana River for all beneficial uses, related educational use, and natural floodwater conveyance.

- Public access to, enjoyment of, and enhancement of recreational and educational experience on, program lands in a manner consistent with the protection of land and natural resources and economic resources in the area.

Climate Change (PRC Section 31113)

The Conservancy's Climate Ready Program was established to address the impacts of climate change. The Conservancy is authorized to undertake projects and award grants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address extreme weather events, sea level rise, storm surge, beach and bluff erosion, salt water intrusion, flooding, and other coastal hazards that threaten coastal communities, infrastructure, and natural resources. The Conservancy is directed to prioritize projects that maximize public benefits and that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, reduce hazards to harbors and ports, preserve and enhance coastal wetlands and natural lands, conserve biodiversity, provide recreational opportunities, reduce flood risk and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, or use natural infrastructure to adapt to climate change. The Conservancy must give consideration to projects in a wide variety of ecosystems along the state's coastline. The Conservancy may provide technical assistance to coastal communities to assist them with projects that use natural infrastructure.

Environmental Education (PRC Section 31119)

The Conservancy may undertake projects or award grants for educational projects and programs for adults and pupils in kindergarten through grade 12 that relate to the preservation, protection, enhancement, maintenance, and enjoyment of coastal resources. Projects and programs funded under this section may focus on history and stewardship of ocean and coastal resources, link science to technology and societal impacts, develop critical thinking skills, or support social-emotional learning and development.

Appendix 3 - Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Guidelines

Adopted September 3, 2020

Introduction

All Californians have the right to access the coast and to live in a healthy environment. The State Coastal Conservancy's vision is of a beautiful, restored, and accessible coast for current and future generations of Californians. We act with others to protect and restore, and increase public access to, California's coast, ocean, coastal watersheds, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Coastal Conservancy recognizes that a history of injustice, exclusion, displacement and extractive processes towards California's Native Americans, Black people, people of color, and other frontline communities has resulted in inequitable access to the coast and its resources that persists today. In addition, the environmental burdens of development and industry have been disproportionately borne by these populations, while environmental preservation and restoration have primarily benefitted the affluent.

The Coastal Conservancy recognizes that we have not done enough to address inequities along the California coast and commits to addressing injustices and inequities. Striving to move forward in an equitable, inclusive manner, the Coastal Conservancy will:

- Improve its policies, programs, and practices to advance equitable access to the environmental, social, and economic benefits of California's coast and coastal watersheds.
- Regularly evaluate and modify program priorities, grant funding, contracting, hiring practices, communications, and community engagement practices, to address existing inequities and prevent additional inequities.
- Increase the involvement and role of under-served and/or frontline communities in decision-making by the Conservancy.

Nexus with Coastal Conservancy Programs

State legislation establishes the Coastal Conservancy's programs and guides funding criteria and priorities. Through these programs, the Coastal Conservancy can strive to promote equitable outcomes for all Californians, especially under-served and/or frontline communities.

- **Explore the Coast:** Increase access to the coast for all Californians, reduce barriers to coastal access, and provide coastal experience for youth and adults that may face challenges getting to or enjoying the coast.
- **Protect and Restore the Coast:** Ensure the benefits of healthy ecosystems, clean water, wetlands, working lands, urban parks, and open space are provided to all Californians.

- **Climate Ready:** Increase both social and ecological resilience to climate change and reduce climate change impacts on underserved and/or frontline communities within Coastal Conservancy jurisdiction.
- **Geographic Programs:** Increase public access and protect and restore natural resources in the Santa Ana River Watershed and in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Guidelines

1. Partnerships

- Build relationships with community-based organizations that are rooted in and serve underserved and/or frontline communities.
- Support people and organizations that are advocating for equity and environmental justice.
- Work with community-based organizations to co-vision desired future conditions and provide technical assistance to build their capacity to plan, fund, and implement projects aligned with the Coastal Conservancy's program areas.
- Provide assistance to community-based organizations in applying for and managing grants.

2. Funding Programs

- Fund programs and projects that increase equity and environmental justice throughout the Coastal Conservancy's geographic jurisdiction.
- Prioritize funding for projects that benefit underserved and/or frontline communities.
- Develop and implement grant programs with input from communities.
- In grant programs, include funding for education, workforce development, and jobs related to conservation.
- Reduce barriers to accessing and spending Coastal Conservancy grant funding.
- Remain flexible throughout the grant process to support the needs of grantees and communities.

3. Meaningful Community Engagement

- Engage with communities with cultural humility to build mutual trust and relationships.
- Meet communities where they are, physically and in terms of their priorities.

- Ensure underserved and/or frontline communities have a decision-making role in the development of Coastal Conservancy-funded projects.
- Engage with communities in public co-visioning processes before projects are developed to generate community-ownership and project ideas anchored in community expertise.
- Value and invest in community expertise. Ensure funds go to community-based organizations to lead community engagement to promote equitable project processes and outcomes.

4. Working with California's Tribes

- Ensure consultation with tribes occurs early in project development and throughout project implementation.
- Ensure tribal concerns are respected and archaeological and cultural resources are protected.
- Seek solutions to state contracting issues that affect the sovereignty of tribes.
- Assist tribes to regain access to their ancestral lands on the coast through the Conservancy's land conservation or access programs.
- Work with tribes to enable traditional stewardship and cultural practices on ancestral land and co-management of their ancestral lands and natural resources.
- Ensure programs include indigenous voices, leadership, and perspectives, including traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous stewardship, and educational programs.

5. Coastal Conservancy Staff and Board

- Strive for workforce to reflect California's diversity across all departments and levels and cultivate an inclusive culture within the Coastal Conservancy.
- The Coastal Conservancy is governed by a seven-member Board appointed by the Governor and California Legislature. To extent possible, support efforts for the Board to reflect California's diversity.
- Articulate equity and environmental justice values in the Coastal Conservancy's Strategic Plan.
- Ensure that the Coastal Conservancy participates in ongoing workshops and dialogue about equity and environmental justice to improve cultural humility.
- Ensure Coastal Conservancy project staff prioritize equity and environmental justice in their work and are supported by management.

6. Accountability and Transparency

- Include accountability metrics for equity and environmental justice objectives in the Coastal Conservancy's Strategic Plan; track and report on these metrics annually.
- Regularly assess where the Coastal Conservancy has and has not invested funding. Evaluate the impacts of our grant programs in advancing equity.

State Coastal Conservancy Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines

Definitions of Terms

- **Community engagement**
 - The process of working collaboratively with groups of people who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interests, or similar situations with respect to issues affecting their well-being.¹
- **Cultural humility**
 - The practice of self-reflection on how one's own background and expectations impact a situation, of openness to others' determining the relevance of their own identities to any given situation, and of committing to redress the effects of power imbalances.²
- **Diversity**
 - A range of differences in characteristics of people, such as socioeconomic status, race, culture, age, gender, physical and mental ability, social identities, and lived experiences.
 - Differences between people that lead to different experiences in systemic advantages or encounters with systemic barriers to opportunities.³

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

² American Library Association

³ The Avarna Group

- Environmental justice
 - The principle that all people should have access to healthy, safe, livable communities and environments.^{4,5}
 - This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys: 1) the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, 2) equitable access to environmental benefits, opportunities, and services and 3) equitable access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, work, and play.⁶
- Equity
 - Fairness of achieving outcomes for all groups and no one factor, such as race, can be used to predict outcomes. Equity is defined in the context of social and racial equity.⁷
- Frontline communities
 - Communities that experience the consequences of climate change first and worst.⁸
 - These may include communities with low-income or low levels of educational attainment; the LGBTQ community; people with disabilities; immigrants; and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
- Inclusion
 - Creation of a welcoming environment 1) where people's differences are represented and respected; 2) that embraces multicultural and indigenous histories and presence; and 3) cultivates community empowerment, care of natural resources, personal connections, and a sense of ownership.⁹
- Meaningful involvement
 - people have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
 - the public's contribution can influence the agency's decision;
 - community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
 - decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.¹⁰
- Underserved communities

⁴ California Environmental Justice Alliance

⁵ Communities for a Better Environment

⁶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

⁷ San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

⁸ Ecotrust

⁹ Coro Fellows Program

¹⁰ California Coastal Commission

- These communities have been historically and are still often systematically excluded from political and policy-making processes as well as government investments.
- Because of these systems, these communities have insufficient funds, resources, or other assets to address environmental issues.

Appendix 4 – Project Selection Criteria

The Coastal Conservancy adopted its current Project Selection Criteria on September 23, 2021.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Consistent with purposes of the funding source.
2. Consistent with Conservancy enabling legislation: Public Resources Code, Division 21.
3. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance – The Conservancy must consider how CEQA applies to each funding decision. Unless an exemption applies to the project or to the work being funded, such as the exemption for feasibility or planning studies, the required CEQA documentation must be complete before the Conservancy authorizes a grant. CEQA documentation does not have to be complete to apply for a grant.
4. Grantee capacity – The grantee has the ability to administer the funds and conduct the project in a manner that will meet the State's requirements and will protect the grantee from potential financial or legal risk. If the grantee does not have the capacity, they have partnered with a fiscal sponsor that will provide them the needed administrative support.
5. Site ownership/control – The grantee has or will have the legal right to carry out the project on the land on which the project is proposed.
6. Long-term management – The grantee has a plan for the long-term management, maintenance, and monitoring of the project.

Selection Criteria

1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.
 - Develop the California Coastal Trail as a major recreational amenity, tourist attraction, and alternative transportation system.
 - Expand the system of coastal public accessways, open-space areas, parks, and inland trails that connect to the coast.
 - Revitalize coastal and inland waterfronts that provide significant public benefits and promote sustainable economic development.
 - Expand environmental education efforts to improve public understanding, use, and stewardship of coastal resources.
 - Protect significant coastal resource properties, including farmland, rangeland, and forests.
 - Enhance biological diversity, improve water quality, habitat, and other natural resources within coastal watersheds.

- Enhance coastal working lands, including farmland, rangeland, and forests.
- Enhance the resiliency of coastal communities and ecosystems to the impacts of climate change.
- Improve public access, recreation, and educational facilities and programs within the Santa Ana River Parkway.
- Protect and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources of regional importance in the Santa Ana River watershed.
- Identify and prioritize long-term resource and recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Protect and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas, and other open-space resources of regional importance in the Bay Area.
- Improve public access, recreation, and educational facilities and programs in and around San Francisco Bay, along the coast, the ridgelines, in urban open spaces, and natural areas.
- Protect Bay Area working lands and support farmers and ranchers in implementing stewardship of the natural resources on their lands.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

- Project provides important benefits to Californians.
- Project is feasible.
- Budget is reasonable.
- Project leverages non state resources including volunteer work, in-kind support, or partnerships.
- Project advances statewide goals and is consistent with regional and local plans.
- Project advances the state's 30×30 Executive Order.
- Protects or enhances significant resources.
- Pilot project has demonstration value and serves as a model to be used in
- other areas of the State.
- Pilot project includes monitoring to ensure the lessons of the project can be shared.
- Applicant has consulted with relevant State and Federal agencies.
- Scientific assumptions of project are explained in proposal, project follows best practices.

3. Project includes a serious effort to engage tribes. Examples of tribal engagement include good faith, documented efforts to work with tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area in the following types of ways:

- Communicate, consult, or engage with tribes who are traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area as early as possible in project development.
- Work with tribes to enable traditional stewardship and cultural practices on ancestral land and co-management of their ancestral lands and natural resources.
- Assist tribes to regain access to their ancestral lands on the coast.
- Incorporate indigenous voices, leadership, and perspectives, including traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous stewardship, and educational programs.
- Respect tribal knowledge and concerns in the project.
- Protect archaeological and cultural resources or mitigate to the extent feasible impacts to these resources.
- Include tribal land acknowledgement and accurate historical information in signage, communications, and other project information.

4. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.

- Project will continue to deliver benefits over a reasonable time period.
- Project is resilient to or able to adapt to expected sea level rise during the project's lifespan.
- Project is resilient to or able to adapt to expected climate change impacts including extreme heat, wildfire, flood, and drought.
- Project will not make future climate adaptation more difficult.
- Planning project has identified potential implementation funding and has a strategy for obtaining necessary approvals.

5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

- Project provides co-benefits and alleviates multiple stressors within communities, such as improving public health, addressing the need for additional recreational amenities, reductions in pollution burden, access to parks and open space, habitat enhancement or other environmental benefits.
- Project increases equity and environmental justice by benefitting underserved and/or frontline communities.
- Project increases community-preparedness or resilience to future climate change impacts such as drought, extreme heat, floods, wildfires, and other climate-related impacts.

- Project increases carbon sequestration or protects existing sequestration on natural lands.
 - Project provides benefits to underserved communities, such as: job training, job creation, workforce development, and training programs structured toward long-term careers and not limited to entry-level skill building.
 - Project provides community benefits such as support for increased civic engagement, leadership development opportunities, funding for education, and volunteer opportunities.
 - Urban parks, urban trails, education centers, and waterfront revitalization projects include consideration of anti-displacement strategies where appropriate.
 - Projects that increase urban greening, open space, and tree canopy.
6. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.
- Engage with local and regional communities in public co-visioning processes before projects are developed to reflect community needs and desires. Project concepts are anchored in community priorities and expertise.
 - Communities engaged in meaningful way to build mutual trust and relationships. Examples could include: 1) process involves staff, board members, or consultants who are from or have experience working with respective communities or 2) process includes dialogue between all affected and necessary parties, and/or direct involvement of local community groups.
 - Engagement process addresses unequal power dynamics between communities and government, historic inequity, injustices, and trauma. Communities have a decision making or co-leadership role in the development of the project, and the engagement process should be diverse and inclusive of the community members.
 - Community is represented on applicant's staff, board, and within the project's planning group, or project is partnering with local community based organizations.
 - Engagement process makes it easy for community members to participate by, for example, providing stipends, meeting in convenient locations and times, using virtual venues, providing childcare and food.

- Outreach facilitated in a manner appropriate for the intended community/audience, and may include mailers or flyers, telephone calls, newspapers, publications, and/or social media.
- Project team has a track record working within communities and incorporating insights gained from community engagement into project planning.
- Materials developed during the project are made available in multiple languages that are representative of the languages spoken in the engaged community.
- For acquisition projects where outreach prior to the closing is not feasible, the project plans for community engagement after acquisition.

Appendix 5 – Financial Report

Memo

Date: February 3, 2022

To: State Coastal Conservancy Board

From: Amy Hutzal, Executive Officer
Mary Small, Deputy Executive Officer

CC: Oversight Members

RE: Coastal Conservancy Annual Financial Report

This is the eleventh year staff has provided the Coastal Conservancy Board with an annual financial report to provide an overall picture of the agency's funding. This report is in stark contrast to all past reports, as it is full of good news. The current budget and the Governor's proposed budget for next year include significant funding to the Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy).

This report discusses the financial situation of the Coastal Conservancy in two areas: Project Funding and Support Funding. The Project Funding section provides an overview of funding for the implementation of Conservancy projects and grants. The Support Funding section describes funding for the operation of the Conservancy (including salaries, benefits, rent, etc.) and an update to the Conservancy's Five Year Financial Plan. The Five Year Financial Plan is a conceptual roadmap for how the agency plans to fund its operation for the next five years.

Project Funding

Last year and in the proposed budgets for next two years, the Governor and Legislature have proposed unprecedented resources from the General Fund to the Coastal Conservancy and to other natural resource and public access programs. This funding is very timely for the Coastal Conservancy because most of the bond funds we have relied upon in past years have been fully appropriated.

The FY 21-22 Budget appropriated a total of \$135,743,000 to the Coastal Conservancy for a variety of specific projects and Conservancy programs, shown in the table below. This included \$105,760,000 from the General Fund. Additional appropriations came from various sections of Prop 68, the Habitat Conservation Fund, the Violation Remediation Account, the Coastal Access Account, the Environmental License Plate Fund, and the Sea Otter Fund.

FY 2021-2022 Budget Act Appropriations to the Coastal Conservancy (\$ in thousands)

Fund		Total (\$K)
General Fund		\$ 105,760
Explore the Coast	\$ 14,000	
Garrapata State Park Trails	\$ 1,000	
SF Bay Conservancy - Wildfire	\$ 5,000	
Conservancy Programs - Wildfire	\$ 5,000	
Pacifica Esplanade	\$ 7,750	
Stivers Lagoon	\$ 2,160	
Great Redwood Trail	\$ 10,300	
OneShoreline Project	\$ 8,000	
BEACON	\$ 50	
Santa Ana River Conservation	\$ 14,000	
West Coyote Hills	\$ 28,500	
Hollister Ranch	\$ 10,000	
Prop 68		\$ 23,693
Habitat Conservation Fund		\$ 3,800
Violation Remediation Account		\$ 1,500
Coastal Access		\$ 600
Environmental License Plate Fund		\$ 225
Sea Otter Fund		\$ 165
TOTAL		\$ 135,743

The Governor's Budget for FY 22-23 includes further appropriations of \$384,663,000 for the Coastal Conservancy, including \$350 million for coastal resilience, \$10 million for wildfire resilience and \$19.8 million from Prop 68. SB 155, a trailer budget bill from last fall, calls for an additional \$150 million to be appropriated to the Coastal Conservancy for coastal resilience in FY 23-24. A summary of the Governor's proposed appropriations to the Coastal Conservancy for FY 22/23 for project funding is shown in the table below.

**FY 2022-23 Governor's Budget Proposed Appropriations
to the Coastal Conservancy (\$ in thousands)**

Fund	Total (\$K)
General Fund	
Coastal Resilience	\$ 350,000
SF Bay Conservancy - Wildfire	\$ 5,000
Conservancy Programs - Wildfire	\$ 5,000
Prop 68	\$ 19,873
Habitat Conservation Fund	\$ 3,800
Coastal Access	\$ 600
Environmental License Plate Fund	\$ 225
Sea Otter Fund	\$ 165
TOTAL	\$ 384,663

These tables and figures only describe the funding appropriated directly to the Coastal Conservancy. There are significant additional resources for climate resilience, conservation, and public access work available to many other state agencies, including the Ocean Protection Council, State Parks, Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California Natural Resources Agency, Coastal Commission, Office of Planning and Research, and others. Last year's budget and the proposed budget for next year represent an unprecedented investment in climate resilience, natural resources, and public access.

In addition to state funding, the federal government has also committed significant funds to conservation through the Great America Outdoors Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Our staff are continuing to look for opportunities to leverage our funding with these federal resources.

Future Project Funding

The timing of the proposed appropriations from the General Fund to the Coastal Conservancy is very fortunate, as most of the bond funds available to the Conservancy have already been appropriated. After the 2022-23 Budget, the Conservancy expects to receive a final appropriation of about \$19 million from Prop 68 in 2023-24, and about \$10 million from Prop 84 in future appropriations. The Conservancy has significant funds in the Violation Remediation Account and the Coastal Trust Fund. Most of these funds are for specific geographies or purposes. The Conservancy will also receive appropriations from the Habitat Conservation Fund until fiscal year 2029.

Because of our success obtaining outside grants, the Conservancy has used bond funds to front reimbursements. When the grants are repaid, we repay the bond fund. Actual future appropriations may be higher due to these reimbursements. The number for Propositions 84 is an estimate as we reconcile past year expenditures and reversions. The table below does not include the approximately \$1 million in annual appropriations for the Explore the Coast program and the Sea Otter grants that come from special funds.

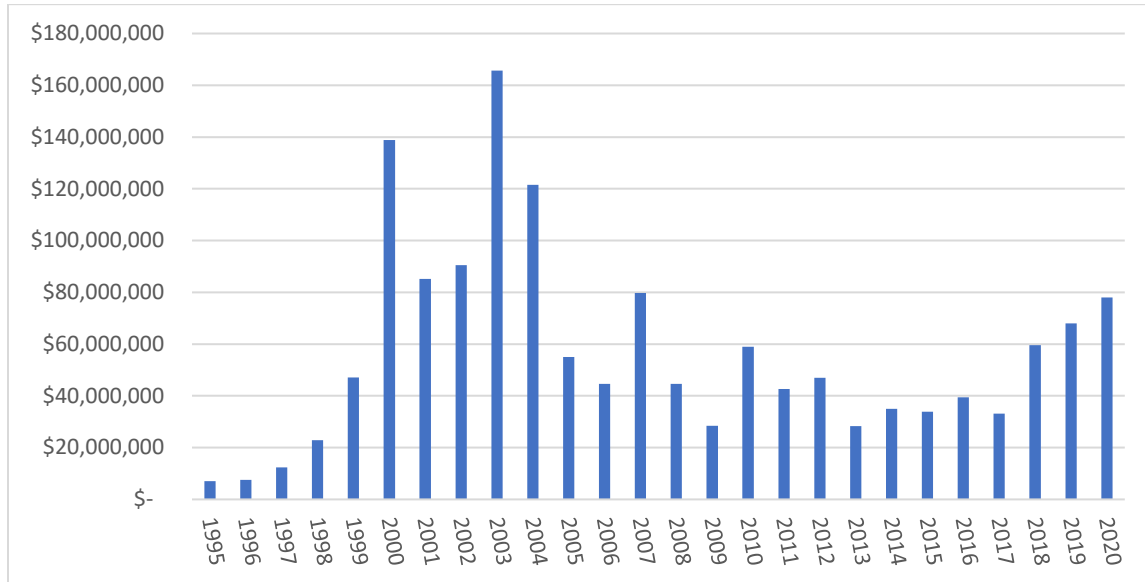
Unappropriated Future Project Funds (\$ in thousands)

<u>Bond Funds</u>	
Proposition 68	\$19,000
Proposition 84	~\$10,000
<u>Other Funds</u>	
Habitat Conservation Fund (8 more years)	\$26,600
Violation Remediation Account	\$17,000
Coastal Trust Fund	<u>\$23,200</u>
TOTAL	\$95,800

Project Funding in Prior Years

Last fiscal year, the Conservancy authorized \$77.9 million for its projects, an increase from the nearly \$68 million authorized the year before. The chart below shows the total amount that the Conservancy has authorized each fiscal year for the past twenty-five years.

Total Board Authorizations 1995-2020



In FY 20/21, there were a few significant authorizations, including \$10 million from Prop 68 for Tijuana and \$13 million from Prop 68 for the South Bay Salt Ponds project. The Conservancy authorized more than \$11 million from the General Fund, primarily for early action wildfire reduction projects. The Conservancy also approved significant funding from the Coastal Trust Fund last year, including settlement funds for Terminal Four Creosote Piling Removal and Once Through Cooling Mitigation funds. The table below shows authorizations by fund source for the past five years.

**Coastal Conservancy Authorizations by Fund
Fiscal Years 2016 – 2020 (\$ in thousands)**

Fund	FY 16/17	FY 17/18	FY 18/19	FY 19/20	FY 20/21
General Fund	-	-	19,810	5,924	11,314
Proposition 1	21,902	19,828	4,605	12,863	11,442
Proposition 12	151	359	6,970	1,149	1,872
Proposition 19	-	889	-	-	-
Proposition 40	950	756	-	-	-
Proposition 50	175	-	-	-	-
Proposition 68	-	-	12,650	14,655	28,762
Proposition 84	7,214	7,664	3,725	8,610	8,800
Habitat Conservation Fund	4,276	2,157	2,573	19,205	3,411
Violation Remediation Acct	161	123	-	95	1,475
Access, Whale Tail & ELPF	1,131	648	825	1,137	779
California Sea Otter Fund	118	90	118	165	80
Climate Resilience Acct & GGRF	-	-	3,800	2,850	-
Coastal Trust Fund	1,600	2,960	4,462	1,336	10,047
TOTAL	37,678	35,474	59,539	67,989	77,982

Funding Benefiting Disadvantaged Communities

In the 2018 Strategic Plan, the Conservancy set an objective of spending 35% of our funds on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities. Since 2018, 42% of all our funds have been awarded to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

Proposition 1 defined a Disadvantaged Community as a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income (Water Code § 79702(j)). These funds are awarded through competitive grant rounds that give priority to projects located in or benefitting Disadvantaged Communities. Fifty-two percent of Proposition 1 funds have gone to projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

Proposition 1 Funding for Projects Benefiting Disadvantaged Communities

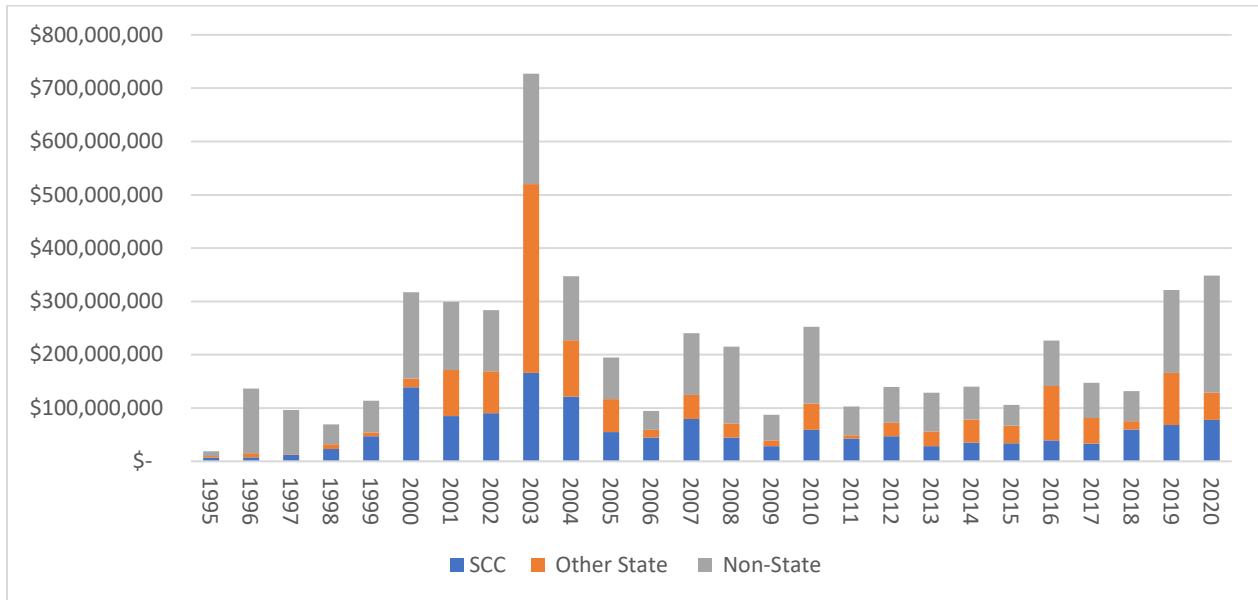
	Grants	Amount Awarded	% of #	% of \$
Projects in DAC*	96	\$ 41,647,786	60%	52%
Projects not in DAC	<u>65</u>	<u>\$ 38,056,411</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>48%</u>
* includes partially in	161	\$ 79,704,198		

Matching Funds

Last year, the Conservancy's \$77.9 million for projects leveraged \$51 million in other state funds and \$219.5 million in non-state funds. In aggregate, Conservancy funding was matched almost 3.5 to 1. Since 1985, the Conservancy has authorized about \$1.5 billion for its projects. Those funds were matched by a total of \$4 billion. Matching funds came from other state sources (\$1.3 billion) and non-state sources including local, federal, and private partners (\$2.7 billion). The chart below displays matching funds since 1995.

Some projects have no match while other projects are highly leveraged. This can depend on the resources of the community, the grantee, and the availability of funding for that project. The Conservancy seeks to leverage our funds, while providing flexibility to disadvantaged communities and accommodating project needs. Proposition 1 specifically calls for the Conservancy to prioritize projects that leverage other funds. For those grants, the Conservancy projects have leveraged \$1.77 for every dollar awarded.

Matching Funds – Coastal Conservancy Authorizations Fiscal Years 1995 – 2020



Conservancy staff continue to secure outside funding for our projects and staff working on those projects. The table below summarizes the grants awarded during the last ten fiscal years. Last year, staff obtained grants of \$9.7 million for our projects and staff. This includes several grants from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Coastal Wetland Conservation program. Grants are typically expended over multiple years.

GRANT FUNDS AWARDED TO THE COASTAL CONSERVANCY (\$ in thousands)

FY	Project	Support	Total
FY 09/10	\$2,375	\$28	\$2,403
FY 10/11	\$13,616	\$334	\$13,950
FY 11/12	\$11,853	\$400	\$12,253
FY 12/13	\$17,387	\$381	\$17,768
FY 13/14	\$7,642	\$856	\$8,498
FY 14/15	\$6,684	\$386	\$7,070
FY 15/16	\$8,485	\$664	\$9,149
FY 16/17	\$21,868	\$1,415	\$23,283
FY 17/18	\$3,038	\$1,059	\$4,097
FY 18/19	\$6,317	\$1,179	\$7,496
FY 19/20	\$8,520	\$594	\$9,114
FY 20/21	\$9,210	\$535	\$9,745

As discussed in the next section, outside grants increase the resources available to Conservancy projects and also provide significant support for our operations. As shown in the table above, the Conservancy was awarded grants that will provide \$535,000 in support costs when those projects are completed.

Support Funding

The Conservancy's support budget in FY 21/22 is \$13.5 million. This is an increase from the FY 19/20 budget, due primarily to two new staff positions and adjustments to salaries and benefit. About 80% of the support budget pays for salaries and benefits.

The table below shows the actual expenditures for the Conservancy's operation for FY 16/17 20/21, and budgeted amounts for FY 21/22. The Conservancy usually has savings in its support budget at the end of the year. The Conservancy's budget decreased in 20/21 primarily due to the unpaid leave program and vacancies.

Coastal Conservancy Support Budget 2016–2021 (\$ in thousands)

Budget Categories	16/17 Actual	17/18 Actual	18/19 Actual	19/20 Actuals	20/21 Actuals	21/22 BUDGET
Salaries	\$4,630	\$5,155	\$5,691	\$7,592	\$5,760	\$6,775
Benefits	\$2,258	\$2,206	\$2,531	\$652	\$2,339	\$4,163
Expenses	<u>\$1,655</u>	<u>\$1,937</u>	<u>\$2,142</u>	<u>\$1,969</u>	<u>\$1,675</u>	<u>2,621</u>
Total Budget	\$8,493	\$9,297	\$10,365	\$10,573	\$9,774	\$13,539

Funding Sources in the Support Budget

The funding sources in the Conservancy's support budget reflect a long-term effort to reduce dependence on bond funds, to diversify funding, and to collect outside funds to support our agency. The Conservancy has diversified the funding sources in its support budget over the past several years. The result is a complicated support budget with fourteen funding sources. The table below shows the types of funding sources that make up the

Funding Sources	Percent
Bond Funds (Props 1, 12, 40, 50, 68 and 84)	54%
Environmental License Plate Fund	19%
Reimbursements and Federal Funds	12%
Coastal Conservancy Fund	6%
General Fund	6%
Other Funds (HCF, Coastal Access, Sea Otter)	3%

Conservancy's support budget in FY 21/22.

In FY 21/22, bond funds make up 54% of the funding in the Conservancy's support budget. This includes the planning and monitoring and the

administrative allocations in Propositions 1, 68, and 84. Bond funds are finite and will run out over the next few years. The planning and monitoring funds need to be spent on project related costs, so the Conservancy uses them to pay for staff working on project planning, project development, project management and monitoring. While the support budget remains very reliant on bonds, we have been reducing the reliance of bond funds. In FY 16/17, more than 70% of the Conservancy's support funding came from bonds.

In FY 21/22, Conservancy received \$2.743 million from the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) and \$900,000 from the General Fund. These appropriations make up 25% of the support budget and are critical to provide unrestricted operating funds. Other state conservancies receive between 35% and 71% of their support funds from either ELPF or the General Fund. If the proposed General Fund appropriations for Coastal Resilience are approved in the FY 22/23 and 23/24 budgets, the Conservancy would rely on more General Fund for its support budget over the next five to seven years.

Outside grants and reimbursements account for 13% of the support budget. Conservancy staff put significant effort into applying for outside grants to support our work. Although there is annual fluctuation, we have significantly increased the amount awarded from incoming grants to pay for support costs. In FY 09/10 the Conservancy was awarded \$28K for support costs from all incoming grants. Last year, the Conservancy billed outside grants \$807K for its staff work; this includes a grant of \$367K to support staff work on coastal access projects. This grant is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for California's Coastal Zone Management Program.

In addition to grants, the Conservancy also continues to staff the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA). Through its agreement with the SFBRA, the conservancy received \$644.8k for staff services in FY 20/21 from the Measure AA parcel tax revenues. Staffing the SFBRA significantly increased workload for our San Francisco Bay Program and we have had to adjust staff resources to meet these needs.

Five Year Financial Plan

The Conservancy does not have a single, stable source of operating funding. For the past twenty years, staff have prepared and updated a conceptual Five Year Financial Plan. This plan does not reflect funding that has been approved by the administration; it is a strategic roadmap to show how the Conservancy could support its operation for the next five years. Actual funding always varies from the Five Year Financial Plan, but it is useful guide to track the resources available and identify potential challenges.

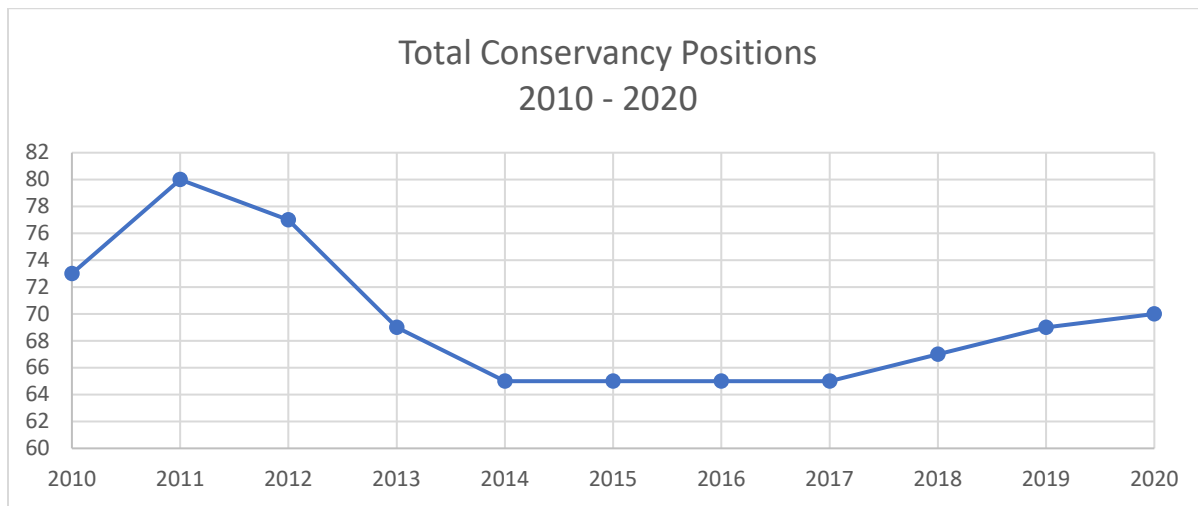
This year's plan assumes that the proposed General Fund appropriations are enacted over the next two years and that the Conservancy uses 5% of the funding for its administration of those funds over the following seven years. The plan also assumes that support budget increases over the next two years to manage the workload and then stays level. The plan shows how critical the General Fund is to the on-going funding of the agency. In addition, the plan includes bond funds consistent with the bond unit's affordability tables, the Conservancy's roll-out plans, and values entered in the state's Hyperion budget program. The plan anticipates that older bonds will be closed out during the next five years.

Five Year Financial Plan 2021-2025 (\$ in thousands)

Fund	FY 21/22	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26
General Fund	900	3,100	3,750	4,000	4,750
ELPF	2,743	3,220	3,220	3,220	3,220
HCF	200	200	200	200	200
Coastal Conservancy Fund	894	881	800	800	800
Coastal Access	150	150	150	150	150
Federal Funds	590	600	600	600	600
Reimbursements	1,129	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Prop 12	668	-	-	-	-
Prop 40	807	807	807	807	-
Prop 50	560	560	560	560	560
Prop 84	1,630	1,630	1,595	1,595	1,595
Prop 1	1,000	975	750	718	718
Prop 68	3,150	3,700	4,375	4,265	4,265
Sea Otter	18	18	18	18	18
Totals	14,439	16,941	17,925	18,033	17,976

Staffing and Workload

One new position was added to the Conservancy in the FY 21/22 budget, bringing us to a total of 70 permanent and two limited term positions. Conservancy management has been careful not to request new positions unless we are certain we have the long-term funding to support those positions. We are working with the administration to discuss whether additional positions could be approved if the \$500 million is appropriated to us. The chart below shows the total number of Conservancy positions for the past decade.



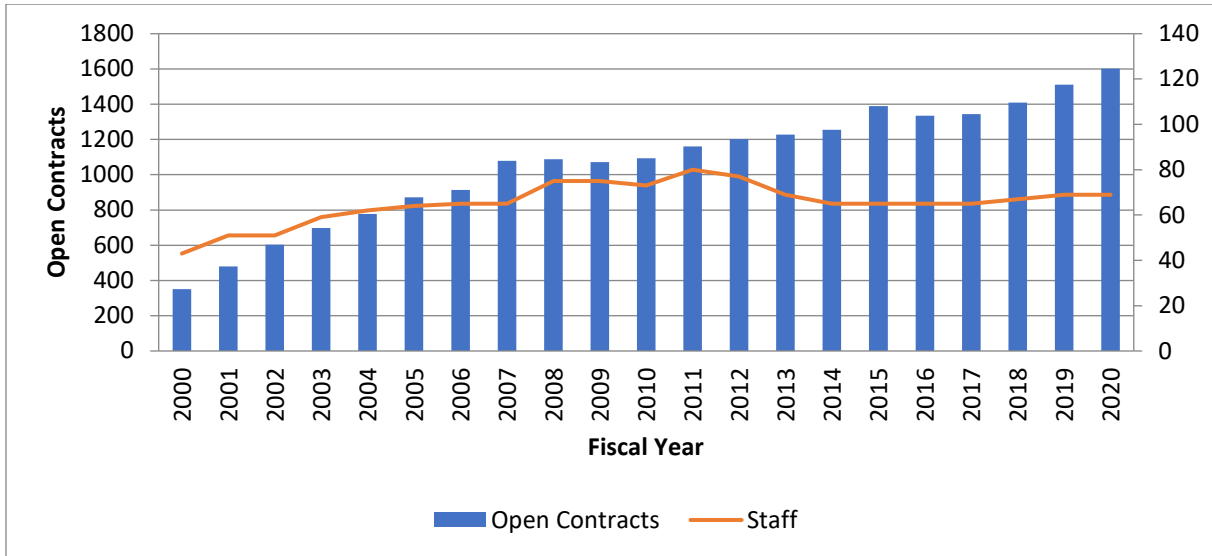
Workload

We have limited the number of new positions in recent years, but the workload for our staff is very high.

This past year, workload has been exacerbated by significant staff turnover, we lost nearly 15% of our staff, including 3 staff retirements, 5 staff moving to other state agencies, and other staff leaving state service or moving out of state. This has created significant work for the remaining staff and the hiring has created a lot of work for the Conservancy's human resources staff and the hiring managers.

One workload metric we use is the total number of open agreements and total number of staff. The chart below shows actual numbers from 2000 through 2020. Many Conservancy contracts are open for 20 years during which time there are project monitoring requirements. Given the project funding picture, we expect that the number of open contracts will continue to increase over the next few years.

Active Contracts v. Number of Staff Fiscal Years 2000-2020



Open contracts are one measure of workload, but there are other important factors that drive workload. During the past few years, staff from across the agency has put significant effort into examining both internal and external work of the Conservancy to implement changes that improve equity and inclusivity in all our work. This work will continue, and implementing actions in support of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Guidelines adds to overall workload. Over the past two years, staff have also adapted to the pandemic, with rapid and ongoing changes to how we accomplish our work, as well as increased reporting requirements.